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CAMPAIGN





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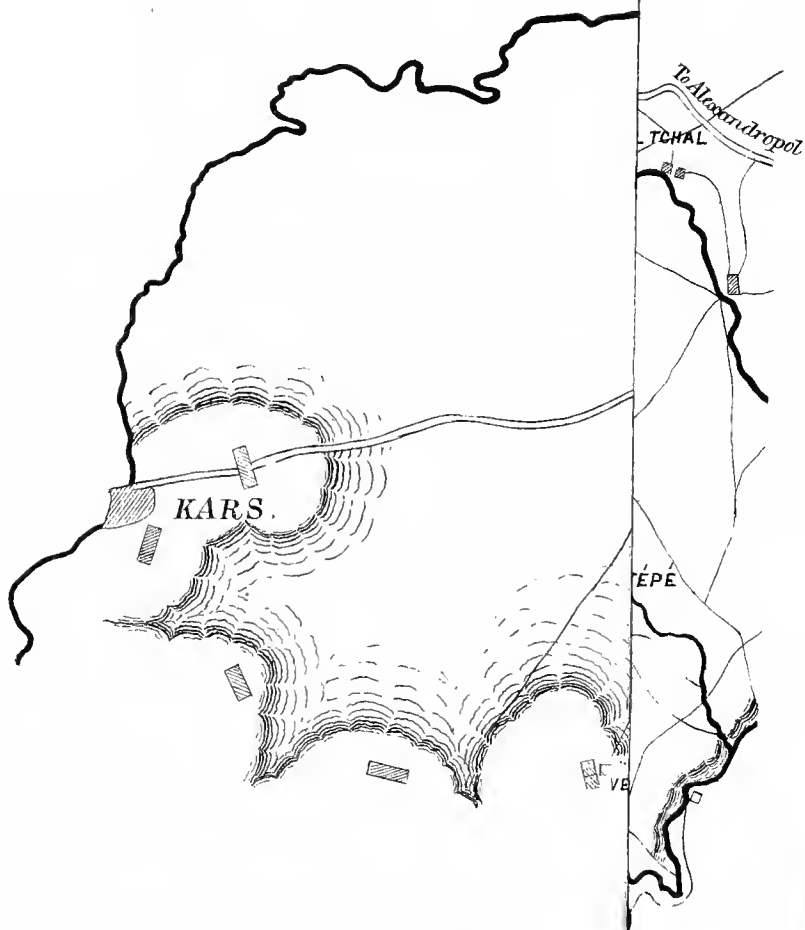
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PLAIN OF SUBATAN.



Russian Positions



Turkish D°



THE
ARMENIAN CAMPAIGN:

*A DIARY OF THE CAMPAIGN OF 1877,
IN ARMENIA AND KOORDISTAN.*

BY

CHARLES WILLIAMS,

ONE OF THE SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS ATTACHED TO THE STAFF OF
GHAZI AHMED MOUKHTAR PACHA.

LONDON:

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"It is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed, the sundry contemplation of my travels, in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness."

The Melancholy Jaques.

"'Let there be light,' said God, 'and there was light!'

'Let there be blood!' says man, and there's a sea!

The fiat of this spoiled child of the Night

More evil in an hour than thirty bright

Summers could renovate, though they should be

Lovely as those which ripen'd Eden's fruit!

For war cuts up not only branch but root."—*Don Juan.*

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

TO

His Excellency Ghazi Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha,

MUSHIR COMMANDING

THE FOURTH OTTOMAN ARMY CORPS ;

AND TO

His Excellency Lieut.-General Sir Arnold Remball,

C.B., K.C.S.I.,

THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT

WITH THAT CORPS,

SIMPLY AS A HEARTY RECOGNITION OF THEIR

UNVARYING KINDNESS TO

AND CONTINUAL CONSIDERATION FOR

The Author.

December 6th, 1877.

INTRODUCTION.



THE time has not come for a history of the campaign of this year in Armenia and Kurdistan, but it is certain that the very outline of it is only imperfectly understood in England, owing to a number of accidental circumstances which interfered with the regularity of the greater part of the correspondence addressed to the chief journals of the United Kingdom—circumstances on which it is by no means necessary to enlarge. Only one series of letters, written in the camps at the front, reached England without a break, and that series is here—in a revised, amended, and in some respects extended form, presented anew to the public.

That in a diary written *currente calamo*, never on a desk or a table, often on the field of battle, and generally either sitting on the ground or on the edge of a bed, without books of reference, or means of doing more than recording the impressions of the moment, there should be errors is not strange; but here any that have been detected have been removed or corrected. Doubtless much has been omitted that has had some bearing upon the progress of the struggle, for until many threads can be gathered up, when peace has once more smiled upon the Turkish empire, and when on the Russian as upon the Ottoman side notes have been compared, and accurate conclusions

drawn, it will be impossible to present at one complete view the whole story of the varying fortunes of the two armies commanded by Ghazi Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha and His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michael. But an effort has been made to tell the whole tale, and to present in connection with it a number of hitherto all but neglected facts, which have an important bearing upon the causes of

“ the war,
And what they killed each other for,”

as well as the probable consequences of Russian ascendancy in Armenia.

No pretence, it may save some misconception to say, is made at an impartiality, which, however desirable for journalists commenting at home upon the progress of events, is virtually unattainable by correspondents recording the succession of those events among all the excitement and all the myriad influences of life in a camp. The book is in one sense a partisan production, and yet it has not been written for any party purpose. But it may be doubted whether it is either the duty or in the power of a correspondent mingling daily and hourly with soldiers fighting for the integrity and independence of their nation—for their “hearths and homes”—to preserve that calm balance of mind which it is the duty of the leader writer, the editor, and the statesman to endeavour to cultivate. Consciously or unconsciously, he must be biassed—it may, as in my case, be in favour of the soldiers among whom he dwells, or, as in the instance of more than one of my *confrères*, against the people and the government which

afford him the hospitality of their lines. For myself, I have seen much among the Turks that sorely needs reform ; but is this just the moment in which large reforms would be either possible or prudent? And I have seen also much that has endeared to me for ever the Ottoman nation, and especially that portion of it which has entered upon the path of culture. That there have been among the soldiers serving under the orders of Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha very many monsters in human form is indubitably true. But their enemies have not clean hands either. Napoleon Bonaparte once declared, "the worse the man the better the soldier," and he may be admitted to have spoken with some authority. It is impossible at this time of day to maintain such a doctrine, but we need not expect angelic meekness from the dregs of any army ; and the cruelties, infamies, and reckless destruction charged against the irregular soldiers, generally called Koords, are no proof that the regular Ottoman troops are in any way responsible for what their officers have systematically done their utmost, in Asia at least, to stop. Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha disbanded the authors of the Alashguerd atrocities as soon as the facts came to his knowledge, and this step had the concurrence of his whole army. Englishmen would be mightily indignant if the conduct of the native irregulars in the Peninsular war were laid at the door of the Duke of Wellington, merely because they happened to range themselves upon the same side. And it is certainly no more reasonable to say that the nizams and redifs composing the bulk of the 4th Ottoman Army Corps were in any way to blame because, many miles off, some predatory tribes,

which Turkey, fighting for her life, had been tempted to take into her service, wreaked upon helpless villages the vengeance they were too cowardly to inflict upon the enemy. But any stick is good enough, in the opinion of some Christians, to beat a Turk with, and the rule which they make so elastic in the case of a Muscovite, is very rigid indeed when it is brought to bear upon an Osmanli.

It is no part of the purpose of this book to deal with the origin of the mortal struggle in which, as I write, Russia and Turkey are still engaged—a struggle due, in my judgment, rather to what Virgil calls “*scelerata insania belli*,” and to lust of a power that the Muscovite would be too feeble to wield, than to any real desire to help the Christians living among the Moslem population of Turkey. My own observations in Asia Minor concur so exactly with those recorded in his official report by Consul-General Nixon, dating from Baghdad on the 15th of June, 1877, that I cannot do better than quote the passage:—

“I can safely assert that the Turkish authorities in this part of the Ottoman dominions are most tolerant towards their Christian and Jewish subjects, and I have not heard of one single case of ill-treatment or collision. In fact, as far as I can judge, the Mahommedans are far more forbearing towards the Christians than the latter are towards the Mussulman. The Christians have the same rights and privileges as their Mahommedan brethren, and justice seems to be fairly administered, although not very prompt.”

I believe it to be strictly true that the Christians throughout Anatolia and Armenia are far better off in

point of privileges and personal security for their homes and property, in time of peace, than the followers of the Prophet. A brother of the quill, who served through the Bosnian campaign of 1876, told me that on one occasion when a murder had been committed, and clearly traced to the joint action of a Mussulman and a Christian, the local pacha hung the former out of hand on the nearest tree, but merely kept the Greek in prison for a few weeks. Being asked why he made the distinction, he replied, "I know one is as guilty as the other; but if I hung the Christian, I should be worried out of my life by half a dozen consuls, and held up to execration as the author of another atrocity by a hundred English newspapers."

In like manner, the provincial rulers of Turkey in Asia are, not only now and recently, but commonly, far more tender in dealing with the property and the liberty of Greeks, Armenians, Protestants, and Nestorians, than with those who are of the profession of Islam. It is on the latter that the heavy burthen of finding, not only the men, but the bulk of the supplies for the army has been laid; and, like Consul-General Nixon, I have observed that in their dealings with Mussulmans, the Armenian traders and population generally give themselves airs of superiority, which are not justified either by their intelligence, their culture, their honesty, their manliness, or their sincerity. Captain Burnaby's opinion of these so-called Christians I thoroughly endorse, and I venture to add that they are not fit for the autonomy which is sought for them, and which would result, as regards the poorer among them, in lashing with scorpions instead of whips. The Christians

exercise the freest possible religious liberty in Armenia. Their churches bear on high the symbol of the cross, and no attempt has for many years been made to restrict in any manner the observance of their forms and ceremonies. Whatever it may have been in the distant past, Islam is not now given to proselytism ; and it tolerates the various bodies calling themselves Christians far more completely than the latter could ever be induced to treat each other. And be it also noted, that the Christians, though still given to occasional grumbling, and cherishing grievances that are little more than sentimental, dread nothing more than the permanent success of their self-constituted champions. In every class and in every community of Armenians that I have met with, there is a horror of Russian annexation of Eastern Turkey. In Erzeroum, it is true, there exists a nest of Armenians who, having been corrupted for many years by the almost open bribery of Mr. Obermüller's consulate, continue to work and plot and lie in the interest of their paymasters ; but they are not more than a few dozen in number, and in any country but Turkey they would have been hung or sent to exile long ago as foul traitors. The great mass of the Armenian population desires nothing better than to be let alone, and to continue to share in the administration of the empire without bearing any of its personal burthens. They declare, without hesitation, that they want no Russian annexation, because Russia would make them soldiers ; and if they have no great love for the Turks, they have still less for the hereditary foes of the Turks—especially those Armenians who, living in the eastern half of the

Province, know what Russian government in the Caucasus really is. If a plebiscite of the Christian population could be taken to-morrow throughout Armenia, without interference from Turkish officials on the one hand, and Russian agents on the other, I believe not five per cent. of votes would be given for annexation to the overgrown empire of the Czar.

If this volume serves no other purpose, it will at least put before its readers the actual experiences, in a wild and geographically important country, of a journalist, who has for more than eighteen years been in the habit of watching little details of public interest, and producing from them on the spur of the moment descriptions of things as they have been seen by his eyes. There is no pretence of exhaustive military criticism, there are no deep theories of strategy, and there are no reservations, mental or otherwise, in the book. All that is claimed for it is, that it is a truthful narrative of one of the most interesting and eventful campaigns ever fought, from the pen of one who was not content to hang about Erzeroum, and there concoct telegrams and descriptions of battles he never took the trouble to see; but who, even at the sacrifice of the daily ration of sensational telegraphy, remained almost entirely with the front of the army, thus being on several occasions the only correspondent who was present at engagements of historic importance.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION	pp. vii-xiii
------------------------	--------------

CHAPTER I.

Turkish Procrastination—Want of Preparation in Armenia—Ismail Pacha's Torpidity—Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha's Rapidity—Distribution of Turkish Troops—The Defences of Kars—The Invasion—The Declaration of War—The Investment of Kars, Bayazid, and Ardahan—Its Betrayal and its Fall—Moukhtar's First Defence—Exaggeration of the Russian Forces	pp. 1-10
--	----------

CHAPTER II.

Mismanagement of Supply Service—No Resources—Guns in Difficulties—Human Teams—Slovenly Marching—Dirty Soldiers—Varied Armament—Bombardment of Kars—Tapping the Wires—Ottoman Indifference—A Shot at a Prophecy—Bazaar Rumours—Natural Defences—Good Stuff coming up—Picturesque Recruits—Born Soldiers—The Bazaar and the Mushir—Armenian "Shaves"—No Ambulances—A Call to Christendom—Russo-German Tactics—Concentrating backwards	pp. 11-31
---	-----------

CHAPTER III.

On the Left Flank—Christian Curiosity—In the War Circle—A Difficult Pass and a Sublime Scene—Official <i>abandon</i> —A Head for Millais—A Telegraphic Wonder—A Natural Organ—Turkish Neglect—The Russian Advance—A Wild Ride with a Koord Guide—Mountain Grandeur and Bothering Snowfields—A Patriarchal Scene—Hassan Kalch—Reinforcements—The "Swift Araxes"—A Visit to a Pacha—Another Illusion gone—The Omnipotence of	
--	--

Pachas—A Morning Ride—The Defences of Erzeroum—Food *v.* Bullets—"Three Black Crows"—Masterly Strategy—Moukhtar's First Move—Oriental Chasseurs—A "Plump of Spears"—An English Revolver—An Interview with Faizy and Moukhtar—No Illusions—The Sevin Camp—Turkish Telegraphy—Hunger amid Plenty—Where is the Game?—A Paradise for Botanists—Our Army Remounts—Russian Delays—Lost Chances—Turkish Felons pp. 32-60

CHAPTER IV.

An Earthquake—A Lost Day—A Tcherkess Warrior—Wild Rumour—A Preliminary Skirmish—The Battle of Tahir—English in Danger—Waste of Cartridges—Turkish *aplomb*—Company Officers—No Ammunition—The General killed—Want of Foresight—A Cossack Massacre—Russian Hesitation—Kars' Rumours—A Parade for News—The Polish "Legion"—Paper Bullets—A General Pitching Tents—Rejoining Head-quarters—Men of Burthen—Patient Souls—A March Past—A Sortie from Kars—A Russian Atrocity—A Miracle of Science—A General at a Bound—Circassian Highwaymen pp. 61-78

CHAPTER V.

The Battle of Helias—Moukhtar's Activity—A Hot Fire—Ottoman Defects—Turkish Victory—Casual Shells—An Idle Day—Biscuit and Water—No Tents—The Attack on Sevin Camp—A Fiery Hurricane—Ten Assaults—Russian Pertinacity—The Russians Foiled—Heavy Losses—Russian Quarrels and Ambulances—Mutton at Last—English Interests—A Separate Peace—A Koord "Lark" pp. 79-96

CHAPTER VI.

The Russian Retreat—Pistol Popping—A Reconnaissance—Muscovite Promptness—Loose *v.* Compact Formation—An Ottoman not a Russian—Changes of Temperature—A Koord Hut—A Pleasant Surprise—A Flank March—Recapture of Bayazid—Turkish Pursuit—A Cossack Camp—The Battle in the Pass—Proper Self-restraint—Modern Shell Wounds—Koord Ghouls—A Russian

Cemetery—Cigarettes and Sugar—No other Spoils—A Russian Redoubt—Leisurely Retirement—A Shell in a Camp—Capture of Stores—Waste of Food—Suspicious Villagers—A Thankful Elder—A Bow at a Venture pp. 97-112

CHAPTER VII.

Rejoin Moukhtar—A Koord Atrocity—Horrible Spectacle—Mount Ararat—Where did the Ark Rest?—A New Suggestion—God's Mount—Theological Shindy—A Run after Moukhtar—*En Route* to Kars—Ottoman Ecstasy—The Mushir and the Koords—An Intercepted Mail—All Clear to Kars—*Al fresco* Justice—English in Kars—Ardahan Battalions Reformed—Bridging the Kars Tchai—Our Field State—A Horrible Sect pp. 113-124

CHAPTER VIII.

Heavy Firing at Kars—Its Imperishable Story—Prices during the Siege—A New Mushir—The Armament of Kars—Atrocities at Bayazid—Suppression of Information—Regulars *v.* Irregulars—Position Drill wanted—Plundering the Privates—A Visit to Kars and the Russian Batteries—Heaps of Firewood—A Credit to Woolwich—Atrocities Inevitable—A Russian Diary pp. 125-138

CHAPTER IX.

A Prisoner in Kars—A Haul by the Koords—Official Story of the Siege—A Hail of Projectiles—New Prismatic Powder—A Russian Spy—In the Kars Hospital—A Moscov Reconnaissance—The Turkish Field State pp. 139-152

CHAPTER X.

A New Series of Movements—Important Reconnaissance—Mixed Cavalry—A Carpet of Flowers—A Cossack Prisoner—A Night Adventure—Kindly Savages—A Change of Front—A Pretty Cavalry Affair—Cavalry Arms—Uncomfortable Activity—Nocturnal Festivities—A Turkish Farce—Turkish Generals: their Devotions—A Sham "Parlementaire"—Ancient Ani—Few Sick

—The Russian Camps—Help from Hindostan—Better Help— Runaway Tcherkesses—Deserters' Lies—Position on Alags- dagh	pp. 153-178
---	-------------

CHAPTER XI.

Invasion of Russia—A Russian "Demonstration"—Eccentric Tactics — <i>Yavash</i> —Bashi-Bazouk Coolness—A Prisoner-deserter— His Story of Sevin—Four Days without Food—Ammunition Done—A <i>Coup Manqué</i> on Kars—Count or Prince?—Muscovite Muddling—The First Battle of Yahni—Mutilation of Dead.	pp. 179-192
---	-------------

CHAPTER XII.

Occupation of Ani—A Peep at the Russians—A Problem for Casuists —Hostile Courtesy—Turkish Sickness and Cookery—An Elysium for Mickey Free—A Mixed Thing in Dancing—Three Act Drama —Retirement of the Russian Left—A Pregnant Resolution— Timid Counsels at Stamboul	pp. 193-205
--	-------------

CHAPTER XIII.

A Comic Alarm—War and Peace—Swords and Ploughshares—A Pretty Manœuvre—A Demand for a Dead Man—Correspondents in Clover—Premature Confidence—The Second Battle of Yahni— Simple-minded Tactics—Buyuk Yahni—A Muscovite Atrocity— A Diversion—Ineffective Fire—Remiss Generalship—Cossacks and Circassians—With the Skirmishers—Among the Irregulars— Heavy Russian Losses—A Sullen Retreat—"The Butcher's Bill" —A Murder at Hadji Veli—Turkish Frankness—Winter ap- proaches	pp. 206-229
--	-------------

CHAPTER XIV.

The Battle of Kizil Tépé—Russian Movement—Our Dispositions—A Midnight March—A Morning Assault—A Brilliant Feat of Arms —Storming the Russian Works—Ammunition Failing—Cold Steel—Battle Array—General Engagement—Blow at our Centre —Long Ranges—A Muscovite Farewell to Kizil Tépé—A Royal Salute	pp. 230-251
---	-------------

CHAPTER XV.

English Doctors and Stores at Last—Their Hospital—Fortifying Kizil Tépe—The Kars Bazaar—Torpid Trading—Dirt and Cheating—Revived Activity—A Karapapak Chief—An Asiatic Rob Roy—Audacious Foray—The Turks and *The Times*—Ramazan—Moslem Prayer Meetings—Hospital Horrors . pp. 252-268

CHAPTER XVI.

Preparing for a Reverse—A New Fuse—An Ambush—A Russian Salute—An Important Deserter—A Trick on Melikoff—Russians in the Turkish Service—Turkish Sanitary Arrangements—Keeping the Enemy Alive—A Fight in a Storm—Another Russian Atrocity—Shooting a Comrade—A Panic in Kars pp. 269-281

CHAPTER XVII.

A Check—Rejoicings over Plevna—Russians "Chok fana"—Armenians hate Soldiering—Russian Goods Rubbish—Surgery by Sorcery—Neglect of Turkish Doctors—The "Capitulations"—Russian Reinforcements—Tit for Tat—A Correspondent Dismissed—Stafford House—Tcherkesses Withdraw—Polish Rapsallions. pp. 282-293

CHAPTER XVIII.

Russian and Turkish Losses—Inaction on our Flanks—Russian Extension—A Surprise Fails—A Scapegoat—Our Tiflis Post—The Last of the Romans pp. 294-301

CHAPTER XIX.

Third Battle of Yahnilar—A Silly Skirmish—Attack on Nadjivan—Gallant Defence—A Sad Contrast—A Wakeful Night—Russians on the Move—Attack on Alagsdagh—Buyuk Yahni Evacuated—Assault on Kutschuk Yahni—A Criminal Picket—Turks and their Prisoners—A Fearful Fire—An Aide-de-Camp's Imagination—Mysterious Manœuvres—A Quixotic Exploit—A Blow on the Flank—Marvellous Musketry—The Russians Retire—Farewell to Moukhtar Pacha pp. 302-317

CHAPTER XX.

Further Fighting—Kizil Tépé Abandoned—The Tables Turned—
 Forage and Food for Kars—Plenty of Ammunition in the Fortress
 —Turkish Money—Stumbling into a Camp—Erzeroum's Defences
 —English Hospital—Wood and Food for Kars—English Goods
 in Caravans pp. 318-329

CHAPTER XXI.

The Battle of Alagsdagh—Unfulfilled Expectations—Moukhtar's
 Field State—The Russian Force—An Irreparable Mistake—Seven
 or Twenty-seven Battalions?—Fight at Oghur—An Assault at any
 Cost—Olja Tépé Taken—Six to One—The Turkish Right Iso-
 lated—Cutting through the Russians—The Koord Ismail again—
 Prospects of Kars—Moukhtar's Retreat on Soghanly Dagh—
 Ismail's Flight—Keuprikeui—Hassan Kaleh—The Camel's Neck
 —Possibilities of Turning pp. 330-338

CHAPTER XXII.

Moukhtar at Gorgee Boghaz—The Russian Advance to Deven
 Boyun—Neglect of Night Outposts—A Russian Surprise—A
 Demonstration in Force—A Russian "Dodge"—Incompetence
 of Turkish Subordinate Officers—A Panic pp. 339-344

CHAPTER XXIII.

Condition of Kars—An Assault Resolved upon—The First Attack—
 The Khanli Fort Taken—The Cavalry Fort Taken—The Hafiz
 Pacha Fort—Heroic Resistance of Turks—Russian Trophies—
 The Grand Duke—Surprise of Fort on Deven Boyun Road—
 Erzeroum to be Defended to "the Last Stone" pp. 345-353

APPENDIX.

- A. Our Commercial Interests in Armenia. pp. 354-360
 B. Extracts from Tables accompanying Vice-Consul Biliotti's Report.
 p. 361
 C. Ghazi Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha pp. 362-366

The Armenian Campaign of 1877.

CHAPTER I.

WHILE Europe was protocolling in the winter of 1876-7, Russia was preparing for prompt action in Asia as soon as the snows had melted on the plateaux and run off the plains of Ottoman Armenia. Turkey, on the other hand, persistently, indeed almost fatuously, believed that peace would not be broken, and that some arrangement would be come to, either by an abatement of the demands of the Czar, or by the intervention of the guaranteeing Powers.

It was only on the 25th March, 1877, that a telegram from London left no doubt on the mind of the young Sultan and his advisers that the worst must be prepared for. Until then, not only had no practical steps been taken to put the province in a state of defence—save that Kars had been victualled and provided with much siege ammunition—but the very Commander-in-Chief appointed to the Armenian, or 4th Ottoman Army Corps, had been kept in Constantinople to advise on some trivial questions of Montenegrin boundaries.

The principal military authority on the spot was the Governor of Erzeroum—an ignorant, illiterate, bigoted, fanatical, and yet torpid person named Ismail Pacha, who owed his strange elevation to one of the most difficult and delicate posts in all the realm of the Sultan to some strange and occult influence in Stamboul, and to the ab-

surd belief there entertained that, being by birth a Koord, —Hadji Veli gave him to the world,—he was more likely than a Turk to keep in order the wild frontier tribes among whom he had spent his boyhood. But the despatches of English officials before and during the campaign showed that, so far from this belief being justified by the facts, this pacha had really no weight with the Tcherkess settlers, or with the nomads, whether they are called Koords or Karapaks, whose atrocities ultimately called for the strong hand of Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha himself.

He neglected the provisioning of Erzeroum ; he did little or nothing to strengthen its defences until after war had broken out ; he exercised no sort of control over the excesses of the Circassians who arrived in the city which contains his palace, from Sivas and from their settlements on the Sea of Marmora ; he did nothing, in point of fact, that he could help doing, until the commander-in-chief arrived, except shut himself up with his spiritual advisers the mollahs, and make to the consular body promises which he never intended to keep.

Very different was the conduct of Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha. We have seen that his Excellency was yet employed at the Seraskierate when the fact forced itself on the Porte that war could hardly be averted. That evening he made an application for a vessel of war to take him to his command, and he started the next morning. On the 30th he arrived at Trebizond, and after three days there employed in organizing transport and calling out the reserves of the pachalik, he went on to Erzeroum. The distance is 175 miles, and the roads were, for a part of the way, in vile condition from the melting of the snow on the hills ; but he reached the capital of Armenia on the 7th April, and remained there eight days, occupied from

morning till night with all the ten thousand details of calling out the reserves of, and organising the supplies for, an army corps. When on the 16th April he went on to Kars to examine for himself the condition of that fortress, and to make himself acquainted with the frontier country which he had as yet never had an opportunity of visiting, he expressed himself to one of the consuls at Erzeroum in terms of modest confidence, if he only got time to carry out his plans. But time he was not destined, at first, to have.

About the period of his arrival at Erzeroum the following figures were forwarded to the British Government as representing the state of the 4th Ottoman Army Corps in March and in April. They have not hitherto been published; the Foreign Office has treated them as confidential. I do not vouch for their accuracy, but they are nevertheless a reproduction of the substance of an official communication.

March.

23 Battalions, nizam or regulars	}	FROM ARDAHAN TO VAN, EXCLUSIVE OF BATOUM.
47 " redif, or 1st line of reserve		
24 Squadrons regular cavalry		
18 Batteries artillery		
5 Companies of engineers		

The second return shows better the distribution of the infantry, as reported to the English Government.

April.

3 Battalions, nizam	}	ARDAHAN.
5 " redif (1st ban)		
1 " " (2nd ban)		
1 " " (3rd ban)		
1 Battalion, nizam		BARDEZ.
12 Battalions, nizam	}	KARS.
9 " redif (1st ban)		
10 " " (2nd ban)		
3 " " (3rd ban)		

4	Battalions, nizam	.	.	.	.	.	} ERZEROUH.
2	" redif (1st ban)	.	.	.	.	.
2	" " (2nd ban)	.	.	.	.	.
3	" " (3rd ban)	.	.	.	.	.
1	Battalion, redif	.	.	.	.	.	HASSAN KALEH.
1	Battalion, nizam	.	.	.	.	.	} ALASHGUERD.
3	" redif (1st ban)	.	.	.	.	.
2	" " (2nd ban)	.	.	.	.	.
1	" " (3rd ban)	.	.	.	.	.
1	Battalion, redif	.	.	.	.	.	MUSH.
1	" "	.	.	.	.	.	VAN.
1	" nizam	.	.	.	.	.	GAVER (near VAN).

This classification does not account for one battalion of nizam, for the summary of this return gives twenty-three as the number of regular battalions. Of redif it is said there were forty-seven battalions, and allowing for one sent to Batoum, the above return shows no more than forty-six. But this is only a small discrepancy. The question is whether there were really in the sixty-eight or seventy battalions, the twenty-four squadrons of cavalry, the eighteen batteries of artillery, and the five companies of engineers, as many as 47,500 men, with 2,164 horses.

If they were in existence in March and April, they had certainly disappeared before May, as will presently be seen. The truth probably is, that instead of these battalions being up to their nominal strength, the ranks were not more than half filled. But it is puzzling to know where seventy battalions of any size had gone to when fighting began, though before that time Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha had called out seventeen battalions of the 3rd ban of redif, five of the 2nd, and one of the 1st, which exhausted his strength within the limits of his command, leaving only the moustaphiz, or

second line of reserves, available to fill up future blanks. It is not surprising to know that the Turkish authorities dispute these figures; but as they give none of their own, the English return must be taken for what it is worth.

On the 20th April, Moukhtar Pacha reached Kars, which had been well armed by Hussein Bey, commanding the artillery, on fortifications designed by a commission, and including not merely most of the works that had done duty in 1855, but vast extensions carried out during more than a twelvemonth under the eyes of two Russian officers—an engineer and an artilleryman—attached as “chancellors” to the consulate of the Czar. Anything these gentlemen could not see for themselves was communicated to them by their spies, one of whom is believed to have held a good position in Kars even during the subsequent siege; but though he was suspected, no proof could ever be found against him.

On the 23rd April, the day of the patron saint both of Russia and England, according to western use, the Porte signified to the English ambassador its intention of appealing to the mediation of the Powers under the 8th Article of the Treaty of Paris. On that night, Russia, unwilling to give her hereditary foe a chance, and finding the season sufficiently advanced for the commencement of operations in Armenia, gave the order to cross the Turkish frontier. This order was obeyed on the morning of the 24th April, and Ottoman Armenia was entered by four columns near Batoum, Akhaltsikh, Gumri or Alexandropol, and Bayazid. They first attacked the long-coveted seaport near the mouth of the Djoruk river, and until this day have made no impression either upon Hassan Pacha, who first held this command, or Dervish Pacha, who succeeded him. As the operations at Batoum have nothing really to do with

the story of the campaign in Armenia generally, they need not be here further referred to.

On the night of the 23rd, or the early morning of the 24th, war being as yet not declared, the Russian column from Akhaltsikh attacked the Turkish outposts at Ardahan, a fortress some fifty miles to the north of Kars, but were easily beaten off. On the 24th and 25th, the column advancing from Gumri met the outposts hurriedly placed along the frontier by the Mushir Moukhtar, and captured three officers and about a hundred men, losing, however, as many as thirty-one of their soldiers in the affair. The Turkish advance guards fell back on Kars, against which, as well as Ardahan, the enemy brought up complete trains of siege guns.

On the 29th April, an artillery engagement took place between the Russian column and the Kars division, which advanced along the Gumri road to cover the retreat of the Mushir. This division was commanded by Hussein Hami Pacha, a general of division, who, in default of any better soldier, was left by Moukhtar in charge of the fortress with twenty-nine battalions, numbering about 17,000 men; while the Mushir himself fell back on the Soghanly mountains with nine (the Russians say eight) battalions and one field battery. Before he left the fortress, the women of the place clamoured at the door of the house in which he had taken up his residence, demanding that he should go out into the field and attack the enemy; but the commander-in-chief knew better than these foolish creatures that he had not enough men to meet the Russians in the open, and prudence dictated that he should not leave the decision of the campaign to one single battle.

On the 30th an engagement took place between Moukhtar's little column and a force of twelve battalions, five

8-gun batteries of artillery, and five sotnias of Cossacks; and the Turks, though they lost some stores and wooden-wheeled arabas, managed to make their way to Yenikeui and Bardez, on the Soghanly mountains.

On the 30th, the fourth Russian column, under General Tergusakoff, invested Bayazid, a town incapable of defence, and the Turkish garrison, numbering no more than 1,700, withdrew from the lofty but ill-built citadel, where they were threatened by 3,000 of the invaders, to the Aladagh heights, and thence escaped towards Van. All Turkish telegraph lines between Ardahan or Kars or Bayazid were cut before the 1st of May, though a little later the line to Kars was repaired for a brief space. The bombardment of the fortress began on the 5th of May, N.S. (St. George's Day, O.S.), and on the same day Moukhtar commenced that system of organization which ultimately enabled him to push back the invaders to their own frontier.

Nothing of any importance occurred between the events thus briefly recorded and the first great disaster to the Ottoman arms. Ardahan had been left under Hassan Sabri Pacha with a garrison of fourteen battalions and sixty pieces of artillery. On the 5th and the 10th General Devel, commanding the Russians, made reconnaissances in force, but was on both occasions beaten off. On the 15th the fortress was formally invested. It had a citadel and two outlying forts, one of which, named Emir Oghlu, was in the charge of a Prussian Pole, who bears the Turkish name of Mehemet Bey, and is familiarly known as the "Captain," a pet soubriquet given to him some years ago when he was a professor in the Military College of Constantinople. This fort bore for a whole day the brunt of a Russian bombardment. At least half a dozen times did the "Captain" send to the pacha for reinforcements, and especially for sup-

plies of ammunition. His demands were either neglected or refused. The next day the fort was breached ; the Russians assaulted, and Mehemet Bey, for want of ammunition, was forced to retire on the town. Against the *enceinte* the enemy speedily brought up their guns, which opened on the 17th. A breach was soon made. The Erivan, the Tiflis, and the Baku regiments delivered an assault under cover of their guns at six o'clock in the evening, and before nine the place was in the possession of the invaders, the bulk of the garrison, disorganized and deserted by their commander-in-chief, making good their escape in the darkness in spite of the efforts of a strong force of Russian cavalry. There is no doubt that only a show of resistance was made by the pacha, who still awaits his trial by court-martial, but against whom, it is said, the proofs of corrupt treason are overwhelming.

Now the military situation of the Turks seemed desperate in Armenia. Kars, it is true, was deemed safe for twelve months ; but with Bayazid and Ardahan gone, the whole frontier lay at the mercy of the Russians. Moukhtar's first care, after putting the eastern slopes of the Soghanly Dagħ between him and the enemy, was to find a position in which to make a stand ; and for that purpose he and his brigade—it was no more—established themselves at Hunkiar Düzü, where, well entrenched, they awaited events and reinforcements.

On the 21st May the Mushir learnt that Ardahan had really fallen on the 17th or 18th, greatly to the surprise of the Turkish authorities, who thought it would hold out for at least six months, and supposing, in common with all his staff officers, that he was now liable to be attacked right and left at the same moment—for the belief in the Russian strength was prevalent for more than a month later—he

raised his camp and fell back some five miles upon Chakir Baba as a temporary measure of precaution. On the 25th he chose as the site of his camp the plateau of Sevin, or Zewin, and still he had only ten battalions, one battery of Krupps, one battery of mountain guns, and two squadrons of calvary to resist any column Melikoff might have sent against him or Erzeroum. I speak, it will be seen, only of the positions to the north of the Araxes. On the south the pass of Tahir was held by Mehemet Pacha, a ferik, or lieutenant-general, with eleven battalions and 400 irregulars, as well as one Krupp battery. In the beginning of June this officer received a reinforcement of three battalions and another Krupp battery.

Up to the 6th of June Moukhtar Pacha's whole force was only sixteen battalions, four squadrons, two batteries, and twelve mountain guns. But by this time his excellency had begun to suspect the truth, that the Russians in Asia Minor had been up till now playing a game of bounce. I venture to say that at the time no other Turkish officer in Asia shared his views; for the Russian force had been so persistently represented as 120,000 strong, that everybody would as soon have thought of doubting the definition that the extremities of a line are points, or that two and two put together make four. From that day people positively began to pluck up a little hope that first Armenia, and then India, were not going to be swallowed in a succession of short gulps. In fact, for the first time, the world had a proof of what had been suspected only by a few Austrian and German military authorities, that the strength of Russia, as an aggressive power, had been very much exaggerated.

A further proof that the Russians were not in great force in Asia was furnished by the fact that they failed to follow

up their remarkable success over Mehemet Pacha in the Tahir Pass. That success they would never have achieved but for the disobedience to, or misapprehension of, Mouhktar Pacha's orders by the ferik, who, however, paid for his neglect with his life. The loss of this position nearly upset the Mushir's calculations for the defence of Armenia, but it did not make him "despair of the State," in spite of all the Armenian stories—circulated by many who ought to have known better, and who would have known better if they had been at the front instead of more or less comfortably in Erzeroum—that the Russians had penetrated to Delibaba and even Koprikeui, which was a simple absurdity, for Brigadier Mustapha Djawud Pacha, who had succeeded to the command at the death of Mehemet, was not annihilated, and had indeed not even been attacked in the position to which he had fallen back. The rest of the story my diary must tell.

CHAPTER II.

ERZEROUM, *May 23*.—It is no part of my business here to speak smooth things and prophesy deceits ; and reserving to myself the liberty of modifying any opinions I may now express by the light of further experience, I must say that the first impressions are very unfavourable to the Turkish cause. From Moukhtar Pacha himself, down to the Koord drivers of the arabas or bullock carts, whose wooden axles groan and scream perpetual protests against a system which has, in these days of rapidity in warfare, no better means of bringing up supplies than on donkeys or slow-footed camels, or by the yet more tardy method of arabas that make ten miles a-day, and are three weeks on the road between Trebizond and “the army of Asia,” there seems to be a want of sustained energy in execution that bodes badly for the result of the struggle.

Ardahan, on which for some time the Turks have been spending much money, has, as you know by this time, fallen after, as is reported here, a gallant contest of three days' duration. There is a disposition in some quarters to look upon this as a fatal blow ; but, after all, Ardahan was not a first-class fortress ; and although its loss breaks the chain of artificial defences against Russia, and is even more damaging to Turkish *moral*, the real defence of this land of contrasts lies in its natural barriers, which should be entirely impregnable. The passes are few and very difficult ; a few pounds of guncotton would make them impracticable. There is hardly a mile of all the mass of

mountains between Batoum and Scanderoon which might not be held for ever by a very small force. But the present difficulties are that the Turkish advanced positions are exposed to flanking operations, that probably one after another of the strongholds along the frontier will go, and that then the line of the Djoruk, joined with the line of the Euphrates by the Gok and Kop ranges, and continued by the Syrian desert, will be found by the Russians a nut rather too hard for cracking. Of course this will throw the greater part of Armenia and Koordistan into Muscovite hands; but this, it must be confessed, seems for the time being inevitable. Once, however, within the line I have named, the Turks could not be forced, although, like the famous Capitan Pacha mentioned thirty years ago by Lord Beaconsfield, they might terminate the contest in a very summary manner, by retiring, as the mode here appears to be, from every position in succession as soon as it is seriously menaced.

It is no kindness to the Ottoman throne or the Ottoman people to conceal the fact that the strategy and tactics manifested in this quarter of the operations are not only apparently feeble, but that the want of ready money and ready resources, manifest all along the line from our proper base at Trebizond, foredooms the campaign of the Turks to failure.

For the first sixty miles the road passes through scenery that would but for its distance from Western Europe soon teem with Cook's excursionists, weary of Switzerland, and tired even of the Tyrol. It winds along the sides of snow-capped mountains one mass of verdure and industrious cultivation wherever the feet of the people can obtain a hold. They are poor, these northern Armenians, and it must be added dirty, for they habitually live among their

cattle, and Murray's warning against "white fleas" is not by any means superfluous. Waterfalls that would in Scotland or Ireland make the fortunes of enterprising hotel-keepers, have here not even a native name; and while now and again the basalt crops out in beautiful columnar regularity, like that at the Giant's Causeway, great masses of conglomerate tower aloft from the beds of the foaming streams which now and again become torrents and devastate the valleys for miles upon miles.

And on this mountain road, made with much skill and maintained with great indifference, the traveller from Trebizond, preceding or following his baggage on slow pack-horses, finds, not many miles out of the port in which a pacha sits helpless for want of money, that there is such a thing as "spoiling the ship for a ha'porth of tar." The Porte had, of course, sent the pacha up a number of field guns and two siege trains, but it had sent no limbers for the former, and, consequently, limbers had to be extemporised out of wooden-wheeled arabas. As to the siege train, which was furnished with iron carriages, the guns were also supplied with wheels tender with age and here and there even dry-rot.

As a natural consequence, about every second mile one came across a great Krupp cannon cumbering the side of the narrow roadway, and with one or both of its wheels gone to splinters or dust. After the first few miles the supply of draught horses ran short, and the guns were taken in hand, literally, by dozens of men and lads at the drag-ropes. The head man of a village would act as "ganger," and, stick in hand, was by no means backward in enforcing his commands if he thought any soul in his team was not doing his share of the work. Slowly and toilsomely the guns would go up the winding path, with a

gradient perhaps as steep as the ordinary roof of an English cottage, until, after many hours' labour, one of the wheels would drop into a rut of a few inches, and then all the labour would go for nothing, as a couple of spokes would give way, and the Krupp would fall out of the available artillery of his Majesty the Sultan.

This is no overdrawn picture, and it might have been seen at least once in every three leagues of the beautiful mountains and valleys that go among Europeans by the name of Paryadres as far as Zigana. But before this post-station was reached, another blemish in the Turkish system of warfare became apparent. Detachments of men—I will not say soldiers—were being sent up to this place on their way to the front, where it is probable some of them may arrive by the time the winter sets in. Officers were few and far between, and were hardly to be distinguished in dress or demeanour from their men. The only way in which they could be guessed at was by some gold piping on their sleeves, and by the fact that they did not carry a rifle; though, on the other hand, they had seldom either belts, swords, or revolvers.

There was no attempt in any single instance that I saw to keep any sort of formation on the march. In each and every case the men went along in twos, threes, or fours, as unto them seemed meet; or they sat down and went off to sleep when and where they pleased. More than half of them were nevertheless foot-sore, notwithstanding that the Turkish military shoe appears well calculated to give plenty of play to the foot, though how it answers for campaigning in wet weather is quite another affair. About half of them had rags or cloths of any and every colour wrapped round the universal fez, not in the least to represent a turban, but simply because the wearers

fancied the addition of some "clout" to their regimental attire. That they were dirty almost to a man might be put down by charitable people to the fact that they were on a march on hot and dusty roads; but there they were just as bad in the morning, when they had hardly left camp, as they were late at night. I did not waste time in going to inspect the camps, but from a little distance they seemed to be chosen with discretion, and the tents, carried by mules, donkeys, and horses, to be pitched with a commendable show of care. On the other hand, there was a deplorable want of uniformity in the armament of the men. A very few were happy enough to have sword-bayonets and scabbards, but the majority were lucky if they had triangular bayonets with frogs from which the naked steel might dangle. I saw on the march—often in the same detachment, I do not say regiment—Martini-Peabody rifles, Sniders, Chassepots (a few only), and here and there even old muzzle-loaders. Many of the guns were in anything but good condition, but some of the men evidently took a great deal more care of their weapons than they did of themselves.

From about Gumush Khana trains of arabas began to multiply; and over this very bare and arid section of the route they toiled, their solid wooden wheels cutting up the roadways, not merely into ruts but into pits, bringing up ammunition, chiefly small shell and Martini cartridges, which may reach Bardez, or Jevranos, or Panak, or Melazgerd, in something less than a month from now.

From Baiboort into Erzeroum—where, although the country is everywhere well watered, even mountain goats, except at the very brink of the rivers, would find it impossible to pick a subsistence between the stones, and where droves of camels, led by Koords of unmistakable

Hindostanee descent, laboured along with heavy packs of ammunition—it was thought expedient that the trains should have escorts, though it was not believed that even Tartar horsemen had penetrated so far already; and if they had, it is not easy to see what use the few files of recruits, left to themselves without even the superintendence of an officer, would have been.

At Karaboyouk, where—since one can get nothing ready to eat *en route*—I was engaged in the interesting task of dressing and cooking a fowl, and had a most observant military group around me, I got into conversation with a Constantinopolitan soldier, who spoke a little of what he was pleased to call French. This man was a non-commissioned officer, and although he and his party were escorting a bullock train of Snider ammunition, and they themselves carried Martini guns, they had not in their possession a single Martini cartridge.

He showed me a revolver belonging to one of his officers, who apparently was too lazy to take care of it himself, and I was rather surprised to find it not a Colt, but a “Smith and Wesson,” bearing the words “Russian model,” so that in one particular, at least, the rival armies seem likely enough to be able to help each other with ammunition at a pinch. This “chouse,” or sergeant, told me the men on the march were not expected to do more than ten miles a day, and it would surprise me to find that anything like that distance was on the average accomplished. As for himself and his comrades, they had the easier task of taking turns on the top of the ammunition boxes in the bullock-carts, where, strangely enough, they evidently had no difficulty whatever in dropping into slumber.

May 24.—The first news on waking this morning is that Sir Arnold Kemball has returned from the front, and that

he has closeted himself with his staff for the purpose of writing despatches which he deems of great importance. I do not think I shall be very far out if I guess that they are to the effect that the Turkish game is played out in a military sense in this part of the world ; that the Russians have got the whole game in their hands, and that their success is only a question of time.* The fall of Ardahan enables them at once to move up their siege train to Kars, which has been bombarded but not formally invested. The Russians have not yet cut off communication with that fortress, generously leaving the telegraph line intact, and amusing themselves from time to time by tapping the wires, and then sending the messages on to Moukhtar's head-quarters. If this story is not true, it is at least under all the circumstances probable, and it is current among all classes here.

But two things are tolerably certain. The Czar's forces are overwhelming in number, and we may put the proportion at five to three ; they are far better provided, for their Government, knowing its own mind all the time while Europe was being played with, and having resolved to make its first great effort in Asia, was throughout the winter accumulating stores of every kind at the very places it wanted them. All this was very well known here, and I think it was not unknown in England. But now we have the fact before us that all Moukhtar Pacha can do is to make a good losing fight of it. Possibly we shall, before many weeks, have the Russians as far west as Baiboort, and even at Diarbekr. In a word, they will have obtained all the ground that they had after two campaigns

* This anticipation was soon afterwards confirmed by correspondents at Constantinople, professing to have had access to these confidential reports.

succeeded in seizing, in 1829, and they will not again be done out of it by the alteration of a double consonant. Almost the only hope for Turkey lies in the Circassian insurrection. As Russia has no command of the Black Sea, and as all her supplies must come up by the Caucasus, if the valiant mountaineers, her hereditary foes, cut off her sources, her army may be in a very serious position. But the best information available here is, that although the Circassians have certainly taken up arms, their number is limited, and that there is no great fear on the other side as regards this point. Besides, if it be true that the Russians in Armenia have full supplies on the spot for six months, and that they are paying for everything they get from the peasants—which can be little besides forage—they will have no need of bringing stores through the Caucasus, for all will be over long before they are reduced to need.

I am sorry to say that up till the present time at least, even among the Moslem population, there is little enthusiasm for the defence. A few recruits are got, chiefly from the country districts, by dint of pressure, over and above the number drafted by the conscription; and recruits and conscripts alike are put through the French equivalent of the goose step; while not half as many people assemble to look at the parade as are gathered to see an Englishman buy a teapot in the Erzeroum bazaar. There is, I regret to add, little of what we call patriotism, and there will be no question of sentiment *à la Alsace*, if the treaty of peace should give Armenia, east of the Choruk and the western branch of the Euphrates, to Russia. Then there would be about as much of Turkish Armenia left as there would be of England if it were all ceded but Rutland and Huntingdon.

How Englishmen generally will feel when they find the Muscovites masters of the Euphrates valley route to India,

the Trebizond and Baghdad caravan route in Russian hands, and English goods shut out from a great portion of the Eastern markets, it is not for me to predict ; but as to-day I have handled in the bazaar here Birmingham small-ware, Paisley cotton, Lancashire prints, and London and Sheffield cutlery, this side of the question may be worth looking into. What one word three months ago might have prevented is now, I fear, an all but accomplished fact. Had England spoken then, Russia would not have been now in Armenia. But now that she is in, what force in Europe or Asia can turn her out ? I start for the camp of Moukhtar Pacha to-morrow morning ; but really until I am on the road it will hardly be believed even by myself. These people have no notion of the value of time, and they have few horses. Every step involves some fresh expedient, and after all there are only twenty-four hours in the day, even in summertime.

May 25th.—There is no news to-day, save that Kars, which has now been bombarded in a desultory and purposeless fashion for three weeks, has had a respite since yesterday evening. Moukhtar Pacha appears to have great faith in Lord Melbourne's doctrine of letting things alone, else surely some diversion might, even with weaker forces, be attempted.

There is a wild rumour in the bazaar—for though it is the Moslem Sabbath, business appears to go on here without a check—that England has declared war against Russia. It would be passing strange if the bazaar were to know of the fact either before her Majesty's Commissioner with the Turkish army in Asia, or Her Majesty's Consul, Mr. Zohrab. But of course the wish is father to the thought in this instance. And, as I wrote yesterday, if England does not interfere, there is no doubt all this

province will be overrun as far as Baiboort. For not only are the Russians coming on enterprisingly, as though they despised their opponents, they are also advancing cautiously, securing every inch of ground before they attempt the next. What they are precisely doing not a living soul here has very much notion, but it is quite clear that we may any hour hear of them on this side of the long line which Moukhtar is trying to defend. He has not enough men to do the work properly, it is true; but is that an excuse for doing nothing? A good map will show the position at this moment very distinctly.

Batoum and the *corps d'armée* of Hassan Pacha are holding their own independently at the north of the line, and so long as they do the Muscovites can only hope to pierce the cordon in that direction by heavy fighting. Nor can they thread the passes in front of us without much loss—if the passes are defended. But the country is before them where to choose in the south-east of this capital of the province. A few miles to the east of Batoum rises a line of mountains which runs in a zigzag for hundreds of miles.

Beginning near Kula, where this series of immense natural redoubts and bastions is supported by the groups of the northern end of the Balghar Dag, the mountains run south-east to Zauramal, then south-west by Kinzitar to Panak; hence due east and north-east to the lake of Tchildir, now again south-west to Meshingerd, east again to Zarbkana, where the river Araxes forces its way towards the Caspian, and then south-west and south nearly parallel with the line of the Eastern Euphrates to Palu, north of Diarbekr, and away to the Gulf of Scanderoon.

Moukhtar's head-quarters are near Bardez, sixty miles north-east of this city, and not far from the centre of the zigzag. But is it likely that Loris Melikoff will sacrifice

his men in any of the passes by which alone this line could be forced? Is he not rather sure to make Bayazid his base, and to push his left well forward down the valley of the Eastern Euphrates, so as to turn our flank by Khynis, and thus get into our right rear? And the worst of it is that, should this really be his object, not only is Moukhtar doing nothing to check it, but he has not the men necessary for such a purpose. I blamed him yesterday for retreating whenever a position is threatened, and I blame him still, for his troops are far more likely to be demoralized by falling back than even by fighting at a disadvantage. If he only had 20,000 more men he might fight, his friends say; and the 20,000 are coming in so that they may possibly be where they are now wanted in a month's time, as 5,000 Syrians have come in the last fortnight. But the fact is that little can now be done to repair the *laches* of the past six months.

The present campaign has been lost by Turkey while Europe was occupying itself and teasing her by telegrams and conferences. It is too late now to bring up the men that are growing into an army. By the time they are ready to take the field all should be over. And yet if only that precious month or two which are wanted could be gained—if only Moukhtar could hold his line, and especially its right, until after the first weeks of July—there would be everything to hope, for I like the stuff of the men who are coming in. They want training; and where are the officers to train them? When they are trained they will want wise handling.

In sooth, every day increases my liking for these simple souls, who are following through the streets of this and other towns red calico banners with tinsel crescents and stars pasted thereupon. They are the wildest of beings. Every other man might sit for a portrait of John the Baptist

in his "cloak of camel's hair," with a "leathern girdle about his loins," and looking very much indeed as though he had never in his life eaten anything even so substantial as locust pods, or so good as honey. The alternative man might act as model to an artist painting the King of the Beggarmen. With a vestige of an European waistcoat perhaps hanging from shoulders guiltless of a shirt, with a pair of cotton or sheepskin pantaloons that might have been new "when George the III. was king," with feet shodden in sandals minus the soles, and with hair as long as that of the Nazarites, and innocent from its first existence of either brush or comb; each of these men would frighten an English child into fits, so grim are their looks, so dirty their skins, so ragged their garments.

But they are born soldiers, and the way they pick up the drill is marvellous to see. They know by intuition how to handle a gun. And in separate detachments are some of the horsemen who may have given rise to the legend of the Centaur. They seem veritably part of their steed. They eat of nearly the same food, they sleep with their animals, they talk to them as to one another, they stick on in any position, but generally ride most gracefully, if not after the forms and methods taught at Canterbury. In a word, they are the *beau idéal* of a wild cavalry.

But their most effective arm is a boar spear of about nine feet, with a bamboo staff and a rusty blade; for although they carry pistols, and some of these elaborately mounted in brass—I saw several pairs inlaid with silver—the locks are flint, the barrels are honeycombed, and generally there is not one in a thousand of them which would not be in its proper place in a museum of antiquities. Besides they have long knives, which do not hack at the edges like too much of our English cutlery

—I am speaking from recent and costly experience—and which would be very terrible weapons in such a hand-to-hand fight as these fellows are not likely to have. But they would be nowhere against a well-armed body of far inferior cavalry, and I hear it is intended to give them Winchester repeating rifles, which will stand them in good stead when once they have learned to use such complicated and to them most astonishing weapons. They are generally a trifle better, that is to say, more fully, clothed than their comrades on foot ; but in the realm of the blind the one-eyed man is king. Every individual brings his own wiry little rat of a horse to the service ; and now that every horse means a round sum of money even here, this is a contribution to the State not to be despised. I am told that these men are coming in at the rate of 200 a-day to the various centres, while the foot men, beside whom Falstaff's ragged regiment would have looked perfect dandies, are being raised by the 12,000 a week ; and they have the making of the present salvation of Turkey in them, if only that restless Armenian by birth, General Melikoff, will give them time.

Under a few energetic Indian officers, what an army might be got up here ! But even Indian officers would want money, and I very much fear that there is not in the coffers of the province of Erzeroum so much as would pay for clothing 10,000 of the horse and foot on whom the experienced eye of Sir Arnold Kemball looks with a satisfaction which is not unmingled with regret that such material should not have been worked up before its need came to be so manifestly felt.

May 26.—I am again stopped from going to the headquarters of Moukhtar for want of a pass ; and no one is allowed beyond Hassan Kaleh without the order of the

Vizier of Erzeroum, or of the commander-in-chief himself. These delays are most provoking, but "Bakàlum" is to the front here as much as at Stamboul, and I cannot well be angry, for the authorities have much else to think of beside making out safe-conducts for special correspondents. One must even grin and bear it for the moment; but in a few days the pass, for which I did not wait at Constantinople, must be here, and then, hey for the camp!—or at least that in which news, if not interest, chiefly centres, although there is no doubt that before long the head-quarters will be back close to the Armenian metropolis.

In default of more active employment, I have been having a long afternoon among the recruits, both at their drill-halls in the bazaar and at the instruction in gun drill on the batteries, which have recently been constructed, not merely round the town, but on the hills which command it. Naturally the men, whose adaptability to infantry drill is a wonder, do not so smartly pick up traversing and sighting siege pieces; but they are no slower, to say the least, than a similar number of Englishmen drawn from a like relative class of the community. And the few who are helping in the field works throw their whole strength into their arms, and labour as if they were on piecework instead of for a scanty remuneration that may or may not ever be paid to them. Murray, whose chapters on this part of Turkey sadly want revision, is good enough to decide that Erzeroum is untenable; but the Turkish engineers seem to be of a different opinion, and at least mean to try to hold it if any attempt upon it is made.

When I first read in the "Turkey in Asia" that Erzeroum "is commanded by a high hill, called Palan Duken," I asked myself, Who commands the high hill? and I find the Turks have answered the question by fortifying it, and the

range of the Deven Boyun, east of the city, strongly. It would not be right to give any particulars of these works, which are so recent that even the Russian spies may not have been able to get at the facts of their strength ; but I may say that they are sufficiently powerful to give the invader a considerable amount of trouble—a great deal, in fact, more than would repay him for attempting to *coup* on the town. Of course I am always speaking under the supposition that the Turkish generals will fight when it comes to the pinch.

If they have any fight in them, they should have an opportunity in a day or two at the farthest. It seems to be becoming tolerably clear that the Russian attempt will be by our right, and the struggle must be close at hand, unless their movements are much slower than we have any right to calculate. We have only eighteen regular battalions with, I hear, but six guns, on our right ; and although the 40,000 (?) irregulars near Van count for something, they do not count for very much, even in the hands of Faick Pacha, who is said to be capable. Van is the extreme right of our line just at present, but there is little doubt that the enemy is in force farther to the north.

In the bazaar this evening the rumour is revived that Moukhtar has been dismissed, and will be here in a day or two on his return to Stamboul ; but I suppose this is only another example of people taking for granted what they think ought to be done. If the Generalissimo in Asia is sent to the right about, who is to succeed him ? That is by far a more difficult question than the bazaar thinks, but one the gravity of which is fully understood at the Porte. And Moukhtar will be maintained, not because he is doing well, but because there is no one else available who could do so well.

Hassan Pacha is still master of the situation at Batoum, and it would be a pity to move him thence, even if he were big enough for the Mushir's place. Hussein Hami Pacha is shut up in Kars. The left centre is commanded by Radschid Pacha, Chefket Pacha, and Mustapha Pacha ; the right centre is under Mohammed Pacha, but not one of them seems likely to command confidence in the chief place. The Mushir himself is at the centre, having for the chief of his staff, Faizy Pacha (General Kolmann), a Hungarian, who is believed to be the best of the whole lot, but whose selection for the chief command would utterly disgust all the heads of corps and divisions. Nothing is known here of the regiments of irregular horse which were to be raised in Asia by retired Indian officers, if report in Constantinople could be believed. But Pera is just as likely to turn out correct in this instance as it usually is ; and people have a sort of half proverb that anything from the "Grande Rue" must be false.

May 28.—What the Turks chiefly want here, besides fresh troops, nature is trying her best to give them. Persistent rains for three days have turned rivulets into torrents, and marshes into lakes ; and from every direction the news is the same, that for several days nothing can be done in the way of fighting. Meanwhile, I am glad to see that the contest is rapidly becoming more even in respect of men, and stores and guns are being brought up more quickly than could have been expected, considering the means of transport. Indeed, if Moukhtar could only count on the continuance of the rains for another fortnight, he might be strong enough to attempt anything.

But what,—as was said to-day while a part of the guard here was being exercised,—what can be expected of generals whose soldiers squat on their haunches when they

get the word equivalent to stand easy? Joking apart, if the commanders prove equal to the men there would not be much to fear. Meanwhile we are gaining time; but the Armenian element has evidently no great amount of belief in the good luck of the Turks, and it is already circulating persistent "shaves" of "the fall of Kars," of which the best authority hopes there is no fear till the summer is over at least.

May 29.—Captain Trotter, R.E., arrived this morning as assistant attaché to General Kemball, but has little news for us. The Armenians hold to it that Kars has really fallen; but, if so, how came it that Hussein Hami Pacha's despatch, just before sundown last night, spoke of nothing unusual? Our energetic consul here, Mr. James Zohrab, was in Kars with Sir W. F. Williams two-and-twenty years ago, and naturally takes something more than an official interest in the fate of the frontier fortress—the only one now left.

I gather from him that Kars is sufficiently strong to hold out if only it be defended with anything like skill and pluck, and that it is provisioned for eighteen months. But Kars will do little good if this morning's news is true, that Melikoff has been allowed to push forward half the corps by which Ardahan was assaulted across the natural fortification of which I have spoken, and has, by throwing a considerable force from Urut along the road which crosses the Kanly Dag, frightened the Turks within twenty miles of the centre of their line, and within about the same of their head-quarters, into withdrawing along the road to Olti as far as the eastern streams that feed the Tavas river. Here there are no doubt a number of small positions capable of being held so long as the floods last.

May 30.—Medical attendance is much required on this side, and we are looking anxiously for some sign from the

Society for Aid to the Wounded in War that we are not forgotten. I believe I am right in saying that each Russian corps has ambulances and a field hospital. On this side we have no hospital at all, and not more than a dozen medical men for the whole army, most of them with Austrian qualifications, and more than half of them waiting events in this capital. There is not a hundredweight of medical stores or appliances beyond the drugs in common use by the peasantry ; and one may readily imagine, though hardly without a shudder, what the day after a general engagement would be like, so far as the Turkish wounded are concerned. If there is anything going to be done by the English National Society, the sooner it is done the better, for Moukhtar's policy of falling back must have a limit some time, and we are a clear month from England, though letters may by chance arrive in twenty days ; so that the Red Cross Society will do well to remember, in this instance especially, *Bis dat, qui cito dat.*

I have spoken to-day to several of the medical men here, and they frankly acknowledge that they would be next door to helpless after a great battle, not only by reason of the insufficiency of their numbers, but still more for the want of stores, nurses, hospitals, and appliances of every kind. If the Porte had ever so much the will, it has not the means to provide these things ; and although my pen has pleaded many a pitiable cause, it has never called attention to one which more urgently demands the aid of humanity-loving, Christian England. I would even put it as a missionary work.

It is evident to all who study this country that "the foundations of the great deep" of Islamism are being "broken up." The muezzins still call (as they are at this moment calling) to prayer, but the mosques are empty,

and the Christian churches are not filling. The Protestantism of the American missionaries is influencing some of the people through their children; but it is more for the advantages of the education than for any love of Christianity, or, perhaps, the least attractive form of Protestantism, that they cultivate the good graces of the gentlemen who here spend a good deal of American money. And this, I say, gives us, as a people, through the Red Cross Society, an opportunity of showing to the Turks that we at least practise what we preach, even though it be far from our own doors, and in the "ancient borderland of Christianity" itself. The call is loud, the need is urgent. Can nothing be done? Even food for the wounded is more than likely to run short; but are they absolutely to rot for want of lint and ointment? *

May 31.—The resemblance of the Russian tactics now to those practised under Count Moltke's direction during the campaign of 1870-71 may be superficial, but is striking. There are estimated to be in the hands of Loris Melikoff and his subordinates about 110,000 men, besides irregulars.† Not counting irregulars, Moukhtar cannot have more than 50,000, for he had only 52,000 a month ago; he lost 9,000 men at Ardahan—which a wild rumour last night alleged to be re-taken!—and he has not received during the last week or ten days above 7,000 regulars. I believe his available artillery is eighteen guns for about 300 miles of frontier, and therefore the German plan is easy of adoption. A curtain of the irregular troops is thrown forward. They

* It will be found that English doctors and stores only reached Erzeroum in July, and Moukhtar Pacha's camp on the 1st September.

† This turned out to be a false Russian report, but it was acted upon for weeks by the Turks, until contact showed the enemy to be far from the strength he desired us to suppose.

are pushed into out-of-the-way positions, and have to depend on their hills for their escape. Meanwhile they have engaged the attention of the Turks from the regular battalions behind, who are employed in manœuvring or securing ground, and if the irregulars happen to think they can make a stand at any point, they may rely that a battalion or two of infantry, with half a battery of guns is not far behind them.

By the end of this week Moukhtar will have another two batteries, though one of these will be without any limbers save such as can be or have been extemporised out of the bullock carts that have brought up the ammunition. I believe Moukhtar fears that Melikoff means to try to cut him off from his base at Trebizonde ; which could be done by occupying the Baiboort road. Consequently it has been, I hear, resolved to "concentrate" at Bar and Sevin as a defence of Erzeroum against an attack from the north-east, and near Toprah Kaleh against the advance from the south-east.

Now, Sevin is only forty miles from Erzeroum, and Bar is much less on the Ardahan road. At both these points heavy works have been constructed, and at the former especially the redoubts may almost be said to possess the character of permanent fortifications ; but the concentration is too evidently another phrase for falling back without much notion of letting that movement be the last without a fight. Indeed, where we shall stop concentrating till we get to Trebizond, it is not easy to see ; and Baiboort is at this moment protected far more by the attitude of the Batoum army under Hassan Pacha, which would render very unsafe a Russian advance up the valley of the Djoruk, than by anything that has been done here.

My final word to-day on the military situation must

be that it is impossible for an European, accustomed, as Macaulay says, "to the splendour of well-ordered camps," to conceive in what a state the Turkish army in Asia has been sent to fight the hereditary foe. There is no one department of the army which is in anything like good, or even decent order. The regimental officers are, save a few of the chiefs, unlettered boors, knowing no more of their duties than can have been drilled into them in a barrack-yard, and, though individually plucky enough no doubt, by no means commanding the confidence of their men. There is no sort of cohesion between battalions working in even the same brigade. There are petty jealousies without number, and with no base, which serve to injure the common weal. And on the whole I am looking forward to a tour through the Caucasus as an unwilling guest of the Russian people.

Just before post hour there is a rumour that one of the Kars forts has been taken by storm, and that Olti has been occupied by the advance guard of Melikoff, which had, as we know already, crossed the Kanly Dagħ all but unopposed—I might, for all practical results, almost say, unobserved. But I am convinced that the news is premature, for as late as Tuesday night the Russians were all quiet in this quarter, and they were fully two days' march from Olti. As to the Kars rumour, nothing is known of it at the palace or the consulate, and I put it down to the usual bazaar desire to, like the Athenians of old, "tell or hear of some new thing." But as regards Olti, there will certainly be another move on the part of the Russians by the end of the week. Her Majesty's Commissioner, Sir Arnold Kemball, leaves this evening for Sevin or Khorassan, and fighting may probably result on Sunday, which I hope to see if it occurs. But until I do see it I shall hesitate to believe in it.

CHAPTER III.

LEFT FLANK OF THE TURKISH ARMY IN ASIA MINOR,
June 3.—The news that the floods were subsiding, and the belief that as soon as they did Loris Melikoff would allow no grass to grow either under his own feet or beneath those of his lieutenants, induced me on Friday, as soon as last week's post had gone, to push on to the front, even without those long-expected papers, of which the hope deferred had given way almost to despair. And as there is nothing like an early start in these parts, and there would be a difficulty in getting out of Erzeroum before daybreak, it was resolved to leave the Armenian capital overnight and to pass it in one of those numerous villages of the plain which are partly the growth of sectarian incompatibility and partly owe their existence to the habits of the people, whose pastoral life renders existence in cities almost intolerable to them.

We happened to light on a Christian village, in which we were received by the head man with much *empressement* and conducted to the guest-house, where our horses were cared for, and where a boarded-off partition, slightly raised above the floor of the stable, served at oncê as *salle à manger*, kitchen, and dormitory. While we were cooking a dried tongue, the whole village crowded in to have a good look at the strangers. They stood on the manger, men and women, but chiefly boys and girls, and stared through the gaps in the partition at the extraordinary beings who reclined in beds made of string, and hung from

pillar to post. Every motion of the strangers was watched and commented on, not rudely nor jeeringly, but with a sort of awestruck wonder that was, in spite of a rather too demonstrative curiosity, anything but disrespectful. The lights and shades, the glow of burning embers, the flicker of the solitary candle, the rows of eager and yet bashful faces, made up a scene that would create a sensation on the walls of next year's Academy.

Up and away by dawn, six hours' hard riding—and I beg to assure the gentlemen of England who live at home at ease, that there is no riding so hard and so very fatiguing as that in which one's horse has to keep to a steady walk, owing to the impossibility of getting up a trot or a canter for twenty yards together—brought us to Killi Kilissa, or the village of the Church of St. Cecilia (some call it on paper Kizil Kilissa, or Red Church, but the church is not red) and soon after to a village beautifully situated on one of the rivulets that form the head waters of the Western Euphrates, and possessing a guest-house far beyond the usual type in cleanliness and accommodation. But before even this place was reached, we were within the charmed circle of the war.

A guard perched on a rock over the road kept watch on the neighbouring defile; a camp of two battalions—the pacha's marquee indicated by its sea-green hue—was picturesquely placed in a verdant valley that lay among arid brown and treeless hills; and all day stragglers from Ardahan, some bearing lifelong marks of the three days' struggle, were met slinking to the rear, under the pretence of being re-formed into new battalions at Erzeroum, whither appeals for reinforcements are continually being sent by Mushir Moukhtar. I could see no guns with this detachment in camp, but it lay some couple of miles off

the road, and it was hardly worth while to lose two or three hours for the sake of ascertaining whether there was any mountain artillery.

Just above Nochultab rises one of the most difficult passes of the country. Two hundred yards from the village itself the road becomes a mere pretence. There is nothing to show the track but hoof polish on the bare surface of the scarped rocks. For fully an hour there is not a yard of level ground, and for most part of the time there is hardly even crumbled stone under the feet of the horses—nothing but bare rock, here and there water-worn and giving reasonable foothold, but chiefly smooth, even polished, and more difficult for progression than any pass I have ever crossed in either hemisphere. The truth is, that this so-called road is neither more nor less than a very bad mule track; and yet hundreds of animals, loaded with stores and ammunition, were being urged up its almost impracticable slope. That only one aged and overladen steed should have come to grief in such a place speaks volumes for the surefootedness of the horses.

As for myself, in sheer pity for my sturdy cob, I struggled up on foot. And the summit, after an hour and more, rewarded my toil. Not only was the view backwards sublime in its beauty—a long vista of successive valleys, threaded by silver streams leaping and dancing in the almost tropical sunshine,—but in front there stretched a fertile vale, completely walled in by lofty mountains and pinnacled crags, and in the midst a village shaded with trees—a notable sight in these parts, where the scorched ground, often of white and glaring limestone, barely supports a scrubby bush to every mile. But the best sight of all was, perched on the very ridge of the pass, a camp of a battalion having two brass mountain guns of the Krupp model, but made at the Tophané foundry.

Here, then, was a "position" at last, and one which presented every difficulty to the attack and every advantage to the defence. To turn it, is from the precipitous nature of the country, impossible, and away to the left or north-west it is flanked by the great river called the Djoruk Su, and the great mass of snow-clad mountains called the Gok Dagh. This, then, must be the extreme left of the Turkish lines—the very point for which we were bent, though we had not expected to find it for another day. The major in charge courteously invited us to his tent, where he reposed in the delightful *abandon* of shirt sleeves and bare feet, and where he held his *levée* for the reception of subordinate officers.

After a few minutes' conversation I learnt that the colonel commanding on this flank was at the tree-shaded village in front with a detachment, and in the course of an hour and a half found him a right genial, hospitable gentleman, who had made the grand tour, though speaking little but Turkish, and full of an energy that, if it were only common, might yet be the saving of the Ottoman Empire. Haki Bey is a man of military culture, and seems well chosen for the important post he holds to-day. Every few minutes he receives reports from his scouts, among whom he chiefly trusts the local mounted police, whose captain has a head and beard Millais would delight to paint. And on our arrival he was anxiously expecting a telegraph instrument, by which he might receive despatches and send off the news his scouts had been at the pains of securing.

But while we were yet waiting, a major who had volunteered on the intelligence service, brought the information that the Russians had this morning advanced from Panak to Olti, and finding no opposition there, since the Ottoman

army had again fallen back—this time, it is hoped and believed, to positions in which they will stand—the gallant Muscovites, determined to have something to show for their trouble, took (says our informant) the principal portion of the villagers and the local constable prisoners of war. When the “machine,” as the villagers call the telegraphic instrument, had, amid great local excitement, arrived and been got to work, this news was confirmed, with the further depressing intelligence that Ahmed Moukhtar had again made one desperate appeal to Erzeroum for every man that could be spared.

ON THE TORTUM PASS, *June 4.*—The first news this morning is that Haki Bey has returned to Bar for the purpose of meeting his general Mustapha Pacha, and has thence been sent to Erzeroum in disgrace for goodness knows what ; while there is no sign of the Russians in our immediate front, by which they must come if they have evil designs on Baiboort. However, they are clearly pushing on, for of the column that yesterday occupied Olti 1,500 men, with two guns, have reached Nariman, eleven miles further, this morning.

Two days ago, on a pass between Killi Kilissa and Nochultab, we heard the wildest strains as of a gigantic Æolian harp, now loud, now low, at one time swelling, at another dying away. Sometimes one deep note would melt into a minor chord, and anon a thunderous swell would vibrate among the limestone slopes and the basalt crags of which hill and dale were composed. On examination we found that it was the wind, which, pouring into a narrow gorge as into a funnel, created the musical notes by playing about numerous little caves in the precipitous cliffs. These sounds very much resemble in their confusion the news that pours in upon us from

various points here. There is no harmony in it; its effect is, on the whole, sad; but it is not without its cheering notes, and it is, at any rate, devoid of art. There is no attempt to reconcile irreconcilable statements, and we have it fresh as it is made. But one would try in vain to weave it into any connected story, and, indeed, one can only tell of what passes in the limited sphere that is bounded by the not distant horizon.

Here we are told of two battalions and four guns that are coming up under the command of a pacha to Nochul-tab, on the south side of this pass, in order to dispute the ground to the last inch; and certainly never was there ground that offered better prospects to a determined resistance.

I believe I was the last man, not belonging to the village, who left Leshkow; and there the people, though very civil to the Turks, and in principle Ottoman, were awaiting the advance of the Russians with entire equanimity. Here there is as much preparation as would suffice for a long struggle, as much ammunition as would outlast a moderate siege; and but for one thing I might believe there was really going to be a stand. However, the absence of the slightest attempt at field works forbids the expectation.

The men have been idling for days, cutting brushwood and cooking being their principal occupation; and on the one outlying spur, which alone could give shelter to an approaching body of "Muscovs," who will certainly make good use of it if necessary, there is not so much as one rifle pit. The men lie about under tents improvised out of their blankets, near which their Martini-Peabodys are piled, while straight before them stretches for four miles to the north the only road by which the enemy can approach the position, and which continues to want the one

thing that is necessary, merely because there are no entrenching tools.

We have shifted our "machine" from Leshkow here, and are telegraphing furiously.

Meanwhile the Russians are up to if not in Id, on the parallel line of attack, and may even leave us here very much alone. As the Mushir has, as I telegraphed to you a week ago he would do, withdrawn his head-quarters to Siven, near Khorassan, and is thence directing the plans of the defence, which, as he himself says, was undertaken hopelessly late, it may be as well to attempt to join him by a ride over the mountains.

HASSAN KALEH, *June 6th.* — The journey "across country," spoken of so lightly, has been accomplished, and I do not know the money that would induce me to perform it again. The distance from point to point on the map, or, as the Americans say, "on a bee line," does not exceed twenty-five miles, and yet we were over fourteen hours in the saddle, and must have ridden at least fifty English miles, all along the base of the Turkish position on its left side.

The first three miles or so were by the course of a babbling brook, our horses happy if they could only get on dry land for one minute in five. Then we began to climb rolling downs which, but for their height, resemble those of Wiltshire; and so we reached a Koord village named Khilsurghi, where the hovel of the chief was readily distinguishable by the three-edged spear, tufted with wool, which stood before his door. Here a blanket of white felt was spread on the flat roof of one of the houses for our accommodation, while a bargain was struck with the chief for his services as guide to Hassen Kaleh.

It is no libel on this village to say that its inhabitants,

while probably strictly honest among themselves, have but the very vaguest notions of the laws of *meum* and *tuum* as regards other people. In fact, they are like Koord society at large, as much robbers by profession as they are shepherds. But the price demanded for the journey was not unreasonable, and as soon as the bargain was struck we were under the powerful protection of the head man. Ten piastres sufficed to discharge our debt for several basins of milk and some "flapjack" bread, and then we began our struggle with nature.

For an hour and a half we were climbing, climbing, climbing, never for an instant out of peril from a false step of a horse or the slip of a piece of the rotten conglomerate rock under his feet. And all this time we were keeping a sharp look-out for the chief's steed, which had been turned loose on the mountain to feed. At length the wiry little Koord mare was found and caught; and while she was being saddled we had time to take a good survey of the country around us.

Far as the eye could reach there was nothing to be seen but lofty—sometimes snow-clad, always barren—mountains, now running in ridges, now rising into peaks. To the north were the Balkhar mountains, to the west the Kop and Gok giants, to the south a lofty range of close hills, and to the east the bastion-like peaks that, as I have before pointed out, form a natural fortification for Turkish Armenia against Russian aggression. Beyond these arose the range of Mount Ararat, second cradle of the human race. We ourselves stood between 9,000 and 10,000 feet above the Black Sea, so that Ararat merely seemed *primus inter pares* of the mountains on every hand. It was a grand scene—one that no pen could depict.

But little time did the chief give us to enjoy it, as

soon as the little mare had been mastered. Then we plunged into ravines, one filled with a half-quaking bog, where I had the profound satisfaction of finding myself on my back, my gallant steed floundering shoulder deep in the morass on the other side of the path. Then uphill again, and next downhill until we came to a snow-plain, where fall number two for the day rewarded the efforts of the willing horse and his master. After this, snow-fields for two hours were perpetually recurring incidents of the journey, until at length we crossed one which had its natural horrors intensified by a wild torrent which burst and bounded through the very middle of it. And when this was crossed, breast high, so that the leaping water found its way into the holsters, I must confess that I, for one, gave up for the time being, and had a good long roll on the parched and scant herbage which served for goat pasturage. All this time we had seen but two horsemen on the serrated horizon, and they looked so like Cossacks that it was quite a relief when they proved to be only Turkish Circassians patrolling the frontier.

Presently we came upon a scene which, like so much in this land, recalled Scriptural associations. A Turkish landed proprietor was in one of the fertile valleys that lie not below the snow level and yet free from snow, surrounded by his flocks and herds, his servants, his sons—distinguished from the mere followers by silver-mounted flint-lock pistols,—and his whole summer establishment. Right hospitable he was with refreshing milk and bread, for which he declined payment, and would hardly even allow his servants to receive a gratuity. Most stately and courteous was his farewell, and his parting directions as to the best route possibly saved us from many annoyances; for our Koord guide, after he was out of his own beat, knew

no more about the route to be followed than I did. But a little knowledge of general mountaineering and a pocket compass kept us straight; and after two hours amid morasses formed by melting snow on the heights above us, we at length reached the plain of Hassan Kaleh, when it had long been dark, and, when, indeed, we were only too glad to find a village in which shelter could be obtained.

This busy centre, an important station on the great caravan route to Persia, appreciated as such four centuries ago by the Genoese, as the beautiful remains of the once splendid castle built by them on the rock above me shows, was roused from its temporary want of work this morning by the arrival of a whole battery of six eight-centimetre Krupp field-guns, bearing the well-known mark of Essen. I am glad to see that all their equipments are complete; and you will know from what has been before said that this battery largely increases Moukhtar's available artillery strength.

The major commanding the battery, which left Erzeroum yesterday, tells me that Djemil Pacha has at length managed at Trebizond to equip and despatch four other batteries, which will be here in the course of a week, or even less; while during the last few days the number of Krupp or Tophané siege guns which have got as far as Erzeroum has reached thirty. Some of these are no doubt the guns that I passed on the road from Trebizond, and that were so conspicuous by reason of the breakdown of the carriages of nearly every one of them. New battalions are also coming in rapidly, and I hear of six within a week's march of this place.

But what may happen in a week! Well, frankly, although there may be a couple of skirmishes, I doubt whether there will be much more in the time named. For

Melikoff or Tergukasoff is not yet *vis-à-vis* with his enemy, and I think five or six days must elapse before either is at any important point. But the best proof that the Mushir apprehends no immediate danger, is that he has allowed this battery to remain here for eighteen hours, and has not ordered it to continue its march towards the front. And yet he has, as has been already reported, been telegraphing frequently to Erzeroum for every available reinforcement. I find grave suspicions recurring of the Russian movements on our extreme right, where the Turkish force is still quite inadequate, not only to check, but even to watch the enemy.

Our present position differs very little from that of last week. Moukhtar's head-quarters are, at the moment of writing, at Sevin, about five hours from Keuprikeui, and the seat of another grand old Genoese ruin. But this is merely to keep his forces in hand, and Keuprikeui will be the centre for a few days from now. Keuprikeui, however, will not be held so much for itself, or even for the protection of Erzeroum, as because it commands the communication between our centre and our right. If it is lost, the only practicable route for troops going to the right will be from Erzeroum or Hassan Kaleh to Killi and Melasgerd, and that road is open to many and serious objections. Keuprikeui, therefore, will if the fight comes off in the centre, be a point of interest; but General Melikoff is not likely to run his head against a wall, even a mud wall—for the Turkish force has no more cohesion—when there are so many other means before him of attaining his object.

Keuprikeui closes the plain of Hassan Kaleh, through which the historic "swift Araxes" steals its many-armed, quiet, and devious way yonder—a thread of blue and silver embroidering a mantle of emerald green. It has during the past week had several redoubts added to its defences,

and if it should be either stormed or turned, the Mushir has another string to his bow, and the Camel's Neck, as the hills are called that divide this plain from that of Erzeroum, may be found by the Russians less easy to break than they imagine.

Business to-day necessitated a visit to the local acting pacha. I believe the Western idea of a pacha is a sublime being, clad in silks and gold lace, with a huge turban having a diamond aigrette at one side ; that he habitually reclines or sits cross-legged on a divan of gold brocade with soft down cushions, and is perpetually smoking a silver and gold *narghilé* that stands on a rich Persian or Indian carpet, at the edge of which nimble and quick-eyed slaves stand in reverential postures, watching the slightest movement of the august creature whose nod is more than law, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, and who is practically irresponsible.

But fact is in this case very different from fancy. I found the great man—who is no marked exception to the rule—sitting on a divan, or long sofa, covered with a cheap print in imitation of chintz ; the windows mended with paper ; the plaster crumbling off the walls of the dilapidated building which reeked with filth, and the floors of which had every board broken so as to show the sodden earth beneath, and present pitfalls for the unwary. He did not wear a beard, and had not, evidently, been shaved for a week. His shirt, not of cambric, but of coarse yellow calico, had never a button at the collar ; his pantaloons might once have been new ; and the cloak which he gathered round his shoulders as I entered was greasy with age. Instead of trembling at his wink, every soul in the apartment fell to discussing with their superior the propriety of an order that he gave at my request. Not merely did a

captain of chasseurs—who had nothing to do with the matter—object, but he abruptly left the chamber growling audibly. The captain of police remonstrated, and the dispute was waxing hot when it attracted the attention of a number of townsfolk, including a Persian merchant, who were in the hall. At once they took the keenest interest in the matter in hand—every one of them had his views to express upon it, chiefly, as it seemed, in an adverse direction, but my Turkish ear is not yet attuned so as to gather the opinion of twenty people speaking at once. When even the sergeant of orderlies had expounded his sentiments, it was unanimously resolved, that as the order had been given, it should be executed ; but that its issue was on the whole to be regretted, and that it would be simply deplorable if it were to be regarded as a precedent. And the great point at issue after all was whether I should or should not have a mounted policeman during the night to see me safe part of the road to Erzeroum !

Over this knotty problem half an hour was not—at least to me—unamusingly passed ; but whether the business of the empire was much expedited is another question. In fact, I see no reason to suppose the discussion would not have lasted until now but that it wore out prematurely for lack of matter.

And so departs one more illusion about the East. They are falling one by one ; yet the last of them that remains will be the idea of this part of the world having any attractions apart from old association and political ascendancy. Save on the sea-coast and in the scattered valleys the country is not fertile, as it is assiduously represented to be ; and where the industry of the people outside the pachalik of Trebizond is to be found, fairly passes my poor comprehension. They are listless, idle,

dirty, and without a vestige of patriotism; and whether the Cossack whip, which has done so much to civilise Poland, will put new life into these folk, remains to be seen.

ERZEROUM, *June 7th.*—Public opinion was, after all, stronger than the pacha, and supported by it the zaptieh declined this morning to turn out before sunrise, so that I had the benefit of a long and lonely, but not uninteresting, ride before half the English world was awake, and as safe, for all the wildness of the district and the exceptional wild people that war brings with it, as a morning canter in Rotten Row.

But the chief interest in the ride was the excursions I made into several of the camps of instruction, and one or two of the works. The former were by far more numerous than I had been led to believe. Instead of four battalion camps, there are seven visible from the road, and at least three others which can be seen by mounting some of the gentle slopes on either side of the highway. Judging the camps which I did not closely inspect by those I did visit, I would put the number of men in each at 750, excepting one great camp which has been formed, or, rather greatly extended, within the last six days, just above this city, and here there must be 3,000 men at the least. Besides these, there are parked between this and the plain of Hassan Kaleh two batteries of Krupp artillery, in every respect similar to that I visited yesterday.

It was pleasant to see, also, that camp duties were being performed with far more strictness than they are at the front, and that each battalion has its own mule, horse, and camel train. I could find few officers who knew much about anything, either in or out of their own camp; but among the more intelligent ones I learnt that they expect

to move at once, and that the battalions have been pronounced fit for service, though the unusual exposure in camp has stricken down a great many men from diarrhœa, while large proportions of the rest are footsore already, as they will continue to be until some radical change is made in the method of shoeing the troops. On the whole, the number of men fairly in the field and between Erzeroum and the enemy cannot be fewer than 10,000 men more than there were eight days ago. Of course, a great part of these have only come up from Trebizond and other places; but the great fact is, here they are, and by so much is Moukhtar's position better than it was.

One great fact which comes to the front in the last few weeks, is that the authorities are now sending up biscuit quite as rapidly as ammunition. Hitherto they appeared to be of opinion that Martini-Peabody cartridges and eight-centimetre shells were meat, drink, board, and lodging to the troops; but now there is a fair supply of camp equipage, tents included, and bread is being hurried on by the dozens of tons per diem. The army should not want cattle, for there are countless herds roaming plain and mountain—nine-tenths of them doomed, if I do not mistake, to form food for the Russians; and meanwhile the Ottoman troops would be none the worse for two good meat meals a day, for they want setting up, and a small bullock, not larger than an English yearling heifer, is but little per diem for a battalion of 600 or 700 men.

The fortifications which have been erected to cover this city are numerous and well-placed, and if they are not of strong profile, they form capital shelter for the troops. I fancy that the very existence of two at least of them will not be guessed by the enemy until they have opened fire. Not only do some of them command the hills by which the

great plain of Hassan Kaleh is skirted, but they render very dangerous any extension movements which the Russians may make to the right or the left. I am in honour bound not to say more. I will not say that Erzeroum is safe—far from it; but I will say that its capture now ought to cost the Muscovs many more men than the possession of the place would be worth.

We had in the front a singular story about the arrival of three English battalions at Erzeroum during the last few days. At Hassan Kaleh the narrative crystallized into a statement that three thousand of a Foreign Legion, composed of English, French, Germans, and Magyars, had come in, all travelling by covered wagon! Of course this discredited the invention at once, for there are not enough covered wagons in all Armenia to carry three thousand men. But a Jew merchant last night at Hassan Kaleh insisted he had seen them with his own eyes; and now, what do I find? Why, that so far from there being a Foreign Legion, five or six Poles or Hungarians have arrived, desirous of being employed in some capacity in the army of Moukhtar. A better modern example of the "Three Black Crows" story I have not heard for a long time.

KEUPRIKEUI, *June 9th.*—On Thursday night, after the post was closed, the news came to hand that the Turks had won a great victory, that the Russians were falling back, and that it was only a question of days for their expulsion over the border, if not for carrying the war across the frontier. It was not easy at first to get at any precise facts; but there was no doubt a great blow had been delivered, and that Melikoff was at Moukhtar's mercy. Presently the excitement cooled down, and then it was allowed that the Russian commander-in-chief might possibly by good luck

escape, while it came to be admitted that he might even hold his own for a time. But "'twas a famous victory," that of the Mushir, all the same. And it was his own doing, moreover; this was no *coup* of a subordinate appropriated by the chief—alone he did it; and that it was done was hailed as a manifest proof of military genius.

But it would be cruel to keep from you any longer the story of this *chef-d'œuvre* of strategy. You already know the position of affairs. On the left, the Turks were at the end of the Tortum valley; their left centre had been withdrawn from Olti and Nariman before the advance of the Russians, and their head-quarters were now at one point, now at another, near Khorassan. To the east of Olti lies Bardez, on the road to Kars; and Bardez, although not in the hands of the Ottomans, had, nevertheless, not been taken hold of by the enemy.

So the Mushir pushed forward some battalions to Bardez, and thence launched the small column along the upper stream of the Tavas river, with the object of cutting the Russian connections with Panak. And surely enough the Russians simultaneously withdrew from Olti and Nariman. It was pretty clear that they could do little or nothing on that line; that, in point of fact, they needed, at most, a battalion on the Olti road, for the present at least; and that they could make much better use of the troops either more to their right, or in the centre. But be this as it may, they withdrew from Olti, where, it will be remembered, they were reported to have taken the whole population prisoners of war.

Now, I do not desire in the least to depreciate Moukhtar's move. On the contrary, it is the first evidence we have had of any vigour in execution. But it is so absurd to make a mountain out of such a molehill, that one cannot

choose but laugh at the fuss there has been raised about this flank march of three or four battalions. The sum and substance of the whole thing is, that it did not suit the Russians to hold such an advanced point for the moment, that they can retake it any day they please, and that the chief value of the Turkish movement consists in the disposition it shows to assume the offensive when there is an opportunity. This is gratifying as an evidence of Moukhtar's growing strength; but if Melikoff is the man I take him to be, the campaign is now being decided on the south, while we have been clapping our hands and shouting ourselves hoarse about matters that can in no way affect the upshot of the summer's work in the field.

In default of any help from the Red Cross Societies of Europe, the Turks have at length set about serious preparations for the reception and treatment of the sick and wounded. A hospital has been established at Erzeroum, with two smaller and supplementary establishments. A few more doctors have come up, so that there may be now as many as twenty for all the 50,000 or 60,000 men on this side, and they are as well distributed as they can be, though Moukhtar's whole camp has only one. Moreover an ambulance has been established, with its head-quarters at Hassan Kaleh, and so the good work goes on so far as the means admit. But the want of medical stores is as lamentable as ever. If England will not send us men, at least she might send us medicines and other necessities for the sick.

Of course, I am speaking in ignorance of anything that may already have been done in this direction; but as yet we know nothing of it here in any quarter. The ailments of the troops at present keep within reasonable limits. "Fatigue" is the principal element in the cases that come

before the doctors, and this will continue to be until men on the march are more regularly fed and are better shod. It is difficult to get Orientals to wear Western boots and shoes; but they will continue to go lame so long as they wrap up their feet in many layers of rags, in which they shuffle along, sometimes with, sometimes without, slippers. Diarrhœa is next on the list, but it is seldom obstinate; and on the whole, Moukhtar Pasha's army is, considering the season, singularly free from diseases of all kinds, especially epidemic diseases; for while fever abounds in Erzeroum, there are only five cases known in the field, and these men have probably brought the disease with them.

Another gratifying fact is that there is only one case of even suspected self-mutilation for the purpose of avoiding service with the army, and in that case the nature of the wound to the forefinger of the right hand is perfectly consistent with the man's story, that he was pulling his Martini towards him by the muzzle, when a piece of firewood caught the trigger. Of course, it is against regulations to carry arms loaded off duty; but it is very difficult to persuade people hereabouts that an unloaded gun is worth carrying.

KHORASSAN, *June 10-11*.—It was, no doubt, a compliment, which would be much appreciated in some quarters, to be invited in the most flowing border Turkish by the commander of what Sir Walter Scott would have called a "plump of spears" to accompany him and his wild gang of Bashi-Bazouks in a ride over the mountains and plains, towards head-quarters. There was only one thing, however, more dangerous than the acceptance of such a proposal, and that was the refusal of it; and having once admitted that I was bound for Khorassan, there was nothing for it but to place myself, with such show of cheerfulness

and alacrity as could be mustered, by the side of the chief, who was easily to be distinguished from his men not only by an air of good breeding and refinement, but by the silver mounting of his flint-lock pistols and the gun slung at his back, with, above all, the Smith and Wesson revolver which most Turkish officers possess.

When my Adams revolver had been duly examined by every man of the band, including a hadji, or man who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca, and who was to form one of the party *pro tem.*, we set out, and I must say got on admirably; for although, without rhyme or reason, we would now gallop furiously for half a mile, and then walk three miles at the pace of a loaded mule, the ground all the time being as flat as a billiard-table; and although the party, as a whole, had a special fancy, when we reached rolling ground, for galloping up and down hill—the latter for choice,—we got over the road well enough, with no other evil result, so far as I know, than the parching of my palate by a great deal of bad tobacco, which, when offered in the shape of cigarettes on the journey, it would have been churlish to refuse.

It turned out after all that this band of five-and-twenty shaggy persons was not coming hither, but was bound by a by-path towards Olti. So, with mutual compliments, we parted at a village in the mountains to the west of this town; and at that village, for fear of accidents, I thought it better to pass the night, seeing more than one of my cavalier friends had clung lovingly to my revolver while they were examining it. I may add that the reports of the behaviour of these wild horsemen are very good. They should be fair scouts, and seem to be content with their by no means regularly served out rations.

Some of the Circassians, for whom the authorities ap-

pear able to find little employment, as they infest and swagger about the towns and villages in the rear, have not so good a reputation. There are stories of raids made by them on isolated hamlets, in which it is even said the silver-sheathed long knife has been freely used to compel the people to give up their hoards; but I confess I have not been able to authenticate any one of the alleged instances, and yesterday I passed through a village called Savr, which was said to have been the scene of one of these atrocities, but the head man would not admit that anything of the kind had taken place, although he did not conceal his dislike to the idea of a visit from the gentry in long coats and with breasts covered with cartridge cases.

It seems as if we were about to have another entirely blank week. Certainly Melikoff is either losing his enterprise or waiting his opportunity, and the delay is sickening enough.

June 12.—It is impossible to live at head-quarters, partly because of want of food, and partly because, there being no tent available just now, there is not a house within miles except in one village, in which there is not an inch of room to be had. But Khorassan is only a four hours' ride from the Mushir's tent, and in these parts that is nothing; and so, following the example of her Majesty's Commissioner, I abide here for the nonce. To-day, there being nothing else to do, I rode over to the camp to see Faizy Pacha, the chief of the staff; and besides two conversations with his Excellency, I had a chat about many things with the commander-in-chief, who, for once, was not too busy to spare a few minutes.

Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha is a man of an age at which many English officers of ability are yet captains. He can hardly have seen forty years, and his face, though bright

and intelligent, does not give that impression of commanding genius which might render his early promotion to the high rank of mushir readily explicable. However, he evidently leaves nothing to his subordinates—not even to the trusty Faizy. He concocts his own telegrams, signs his own general orders, knows to a nicety where everything is that he has, and where a great deal ought to be that he has not; and above all, leaves nothing to chance. He dresses as simply as any lieutenant—more simply in fact, for he has not about him one badge of rank, or a single line of lace to distinguish him from any of his subordinates. But by the care of his soldiers his sea-green tent is planted round with small firs, and two sentries stand always on either side of the entrance. Inside there is no luxury—not even fair comfort. A low camp bedstead serves during the daytime as a divan, and two iron camp stools, with a basin and soapbox, complete the furniture.

Whoever gets fairly into chat with his Excellency must perforce respect him. His views are perfectly clear; he permits himself no illusions. He believes himself to be outmatched. He knows that he wants men and stores, but he is content to make shift with what he has got. On one point he is convinced—that the Russians are well served by spies; and he attributes the withdrawal of the troops from Olti last week to the news of his intention to send the flanking column having reached the Russians in the morning. One does not argue with a commander-in-chief in his own camp; but I cannot help saying that his battalions would not have moved the Muscovites from Olti if they wanted to stop there.

The Mushir has a very strong position where he is, and he has entrenched the heights with much skill; so that if ever the enemy do attack him here, they will have a very

tough task before them. The camp occupies a tableland of not far from 7,000 feet elevation, almost due north of Khorassan. It covers or commands three passes, and it has good communication to right and left. In any possible attack on the centre of the Turkish position, this camp would be of the utmost importance; but if the attack is to the southward, the camp will be of little or no use. However, it is inuring the rank and file to exposure and the wear and tear of a soldier's life, and in it Moukhtar is content to await events.

KHORASSAN, *June 13*.—Confined to my khan, partly by the thunderstorm, which, accompanied by a deluge of rain, has now lasted for three days, and partly by an attack of low fever, the result of fatigue and exposure, it seems well in an interval of repose, obtained by the alternate exhibition of quinine and chlorodyne, to endeavour to pick up some of the dropped threads of the last few days.

The one wire that exists between Stamboul and Moukhtar Pacha's camp is charged with messages for twenty-two out of the twenty-four hours. It is next to impossible to get a message through from here to Erzeroum or to Constantinople. On Friday I sent a business message to Pera, paying for the answer. Five complete days have gone by, and no reply is yet to hand, while I am told by the telegraph clerk that I shall be lucky if I get any answer at all, as private messages are lying in heaps all along the line, waiting for the chance of transmission, which never arrives.

Even the potent backshish, which unlocks nearly all doors in this country, fails here, since one cannot well "get at" all the clerks along a line of 800 or 900 miles, and since the authorities keep a most jealous watch on the transmission of their own telegrams. If, for example, one were

to succeed in inducing an operator at the instrument here to send out of its turn a Turkish message (he can send no other) the chances are that the fact would be discovered by no less a personage than the Mushir himself, who is morning, noon, and night in the telegraph tent close to his own. In such a case one would not like to be in that hapless clerk's place; for in Turkey all telegraph officials are not only sworn to secrecy and impartiality, but they form a part of the military system, are distinguished among themselves by relative rank, and are subject to martial law at all times. The Mushir is a *fort bon homme*, but he would be more than mortal if he tolerated such a breach of discipline when he is every hour lamenting that his own service despatches are subject to the most annoying delays.

Then as to food, beshrew me, but it is a repetition, in another form, of "water, water all round, nor any drop to drink." Great herds of beeves roam over the Araxes' meadows, waiting to nourish the Russians, and cattle are so plentiful that they yoke ten or eleven couples of sturdy oxen to one plough. Huge flocks of fat-tailed sheep and goats are folded every night in the village, generally on the top of the flat-roofed houses, where huge, tawny, black-muzzled mastiffs and feather-eared lurchers guard them until dawn. Fowls are only too numerous, and I shall never see a capon's wing again on my plate—or for that matter an omelette—without loathing; for if any man will try to live upon capon and dried neats' tongues, alternated with eggs and milk for a week, he will not care to repeat the experiment.

But the only way in which one can get a beefsteak is to have a bullock slain for one's especial use; and as the meat will not keep for more than twenty-four hours, this is revoltingly wasteful; for self and servants in that space could

not eat six pounds out of the six hundred. I have just given the order for the slaughter—the murder I was about to write—of a sheep, which has cost me seven shillings, and for the first time for days fresh meat may cross my lips this evening. There are no such things known as what we call vegetables. Copious inquiry has indeed resulted in the procurement of a small dish of dried lentils; but to an Englishman, who is, like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, a great eater of beef, this country is a desolation and a wilderness. Game! I have ridden several hundreds of miles now, through the wildest parts of Armenia, and I protest that while there are myriads of moles and weasels, and tiny lizards, they are the only wild creatures of four feet that I have seen. Peasants here and there hang up in their earthen huts a deer's pelt; but on inquiry one is sure to find the beast was astray several years ago. Even foxes are few in number.

Murray speaks of the great plains as abounding with wild and water birds; but I never heard of anybody eating storks or herons, bustards and kites, peewits and sand-pipers. So in the midst of plenty we ride hungry over those arid hills on which not even the wild wormwood will grow; or over those giant downs—a very paradise for botanists, glorious with multitudinous wild-flowers of a hundred species, half of them new to me, but with never a blade of grass; or along those well watered valleys, which ought to be fertile, but which, at least this year, are so sparsely cultivated that a patch of growing corn of any kind is a sort of pleasant surprise, and I wondered whether it was the war at their doors, or the sour milk, sour unleavened bread, and the infrequent eggs on which the people live, that make them sit around so listlessly, active only in the chatter in which they put any party of Gauls to

shame, and on the look-out how to pick up paras by other means than regular work.

When we are in difficulties about our remounts for cavalry and artillery, it is strange we do not try this land, where in ordinary times splendid horses are to be bought for the merest trifles. For my black cob, about six years old, strong as an ox and gentle as a lamb, it is true I gave eighteen Turkish pounds, or rather over £16 sterling; but then I was a griffin. He was a steed in a thousand, and I do not repent my bargain. Since then another horse, who would not disgrace the Bays, has cost £7; and yet another, strong and young—a flea-bitten grey-roan—no more than £5. Three-year-old colts, sound and well-knit, may be had in ordinary years for £2 to £3, while those standing 15·1 hands might cost, perhaps, another pound.

At the camp I have asked the cost all round of the artillery horses, which would certainly bear comparison with those of the best battery that ever drilled on Woolwich Common, and was told they probably averaged about £7 to £9 sterling, the most of these being half-bred horses, and all of them of a good dark brown, “sherry” bay, or deep chestnut. Some of our horse dealers could make a fortune here. In one village, the other day, the head man offered me my choice of about sixty horses—brood mares, colts of two and three years, and yearlings—at £7, that is to say at £8 Turkish; and I think I could have mounted out of that herd a very good half-troop of English light dragoons.

At present, doubtless, the export of horses would be forbidden, and after the war Russia would find Armenia an excellent recruiting ground for artillery horses; but if the integrity of Turkey should still be preserved, I cannot help thinking we might do worse than import horses largely

from this province for purposes alike of war and of pleasure.*

The news that I jotted down a week ago of large reinforcements on their way up is being daily confirmed. The regiments, as soon as they are organized, clothed, and drilled, are sent off to the front with much impartiality. Each *corps d'armée* receives an equal share, and in the one or two instances in which a difference has been made, it has been because of a special want of men, as on our extreme right. Venturing out this evening, I found a new regiment had just come into position on the south side of the Araxes, and for the moment at least supplying strength at a point where I have found it deficient, namely, between Moukhtar's and the Alashguerd divisions, where the bastion-like mountains are pierced by the historic river on whose bank I write.

Hitherto we have only had half a battalion here, and as the new comers have thrown out lines of communication to their left, there will probably be to-morrow a similar movement to the Marshal's right. In fact, so much has the Russian delay been playing into the hands of the Porte, that I should be even hopeful of the Turkish cause here if the want of power in artillery could only be remedied. But I believe I am right in saying that at this moment there is not a single gun, not even a mountain piece, between Moukhtar's camp and Zadikhan, a distance,—in the very middle of the Ottoman lines too—of over forty miles.

* In Ezekiel xxvii., where the prophet recites the glories of the commerce of Tyre while predicting its downfall, he says, "They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs with horses and horsemen and mules." J. Kitto, D.D., thus comments: "Togarmah, we believe, with Michaelis, to have been Armenia. This country was in very ancient times celebrated for its horses."

Meanwhile, plenty of ordinary stores are coming up, and if we only get a respite of another week or two, the Mushir may make a good fight of it yet.

I think Melikoff would have pushed on a great deal quicker than he has lately done if he were so well served by his spies as he is supposed at our head-quarters to be. A mere fortnight ago a Russian column of 20,000 men could have marched into Erzeroum almost without striking a blow or firing many serious shots. Even now that is out of the question, and the tables may be turned before long.

Two months have elapsed since the invasion began, and the farthest point the Russians reached without even holding it, namely, Nariman, is not 100 miles from the frontier. Over eighty miles of that distance was covered in the first month, and the inaction of the last few weeks remains as much of a mystery here as ever. If there is not deep and far-reaching strategy or timid policy at the bottom of it, the only name for such hesitation is simple folly.

Even at Kars there seems to be little progress; for, if our reports can be trusted, the garrison continues to make sorties, and the besiegers to suffer heavily. Since, a fortnight ago, our wire was cut, we have had no regular intelligence from the beleaguered fortress; but now and again a Circassian steals out, and if these fellows can be believed, there is no fear as yet for the scene of Sir W. F. Williams's heroic defence twenty-two years ago.

A Turkish prison is, indeed, a horrible place, but I am not sure that it is not preferable to marching under an Armenian summer sun. To-day several gangs of convicts have passed along the road in charge of mounted police; they were invariably the poorest of poor creatures, with hardly a rag to cover their nakedness, or a scrap of calico to put between their heads and the burning sun. It is

needless to say that the zaptiehs escorting them had little mercy upon them. They took saddle-bags and nosebags off their horses to lay them on the shoulders of the prisoners, and they were not above urging on the latter by blows from the butts of the Winchester repeating rifles with which most of the mounted constables—themselves “a ragged regiment,” if ever there was one—are now supplied. And in every case it was most touching to see the willingness and resignation of the poor devils, each tied to the other by a piece of knotted rope. They never complained in the slightest. It was “kismet,” and there was nothing for it but patience and long-suffering; and so they trudged along nearly as fast as the horses could walk.

One gang, in particular, which had rather a kind officer and a most brutal sergeant, and which consisted entirely of “murderers,” if the authorities in charge could be credited, at one of the stoppages, when the horses were exhausted, actually proposed to clean the steeds, and the sergeant drove them with many blows into a corner, where they huddled together until the lieutenant gave them leave to have half an hour’s repose at full stretch. I shall not forget for a while the look of gratitude the wretches gave him, nor the way in which, with one consent, they prostrated themselves before him and kissed his very boots. Pity’s self were dead if these convicts had not moved it; and I could not help contrasting their condition with that of their well-fed, well cared-for, com-rogues in Great Britain.

CHAPTER IV.

June 14th.—To-day began with an earthquake, and culminated in a disappointment. Between twelve and one o'clock this morning I was awoke by the earthen roof of the khan tumbling about my ears, and after I was fairly awake the rocking sensation, with a rumbling noise, must have continued for several seconds. A good many roofs appear to have slightly suffered, but on the whole no great harm was done.

Soon after daylight I was in the saddle, and off for a ride in the direction of Zarbkana, where I was told Mahommed Pacha, commanding on the right of the Araxes, would meet the Mushir. But after six or seven hours' hard riding I had the benefit of the exercise for my pains, as the point at which I was aiming is on the south side of the river, which is not here fordable, and the two or three solitary scouts whom I met of course knew nothing of the Mushir and his movements. Saying with Titus "*Perdidi diem*," there was nothing for it but to head back to Khorasan, and, thanks to a fairly level road, the journey home was done in an hour less than the journey out.

Still, eleven hours in the stirrups indispose one to jot down mere trivialities of travel, and there is nothing else to record of the day's doings. Moreover, three troops of Circassians have arrived during the evening, and encamped on an adjoining meadow, to which some of them appear to prefer the shelter of my room, and out of it there is no getting them. They may be most redoubtable warriors ;

they are indubitably most capable thieves, for my small store of groceries has nearly gone. But the excellent Mahometan who was just now crunching a lump of white sugar that could have come from nowhere but my saddle-bags, is at this moment engaged on my mat in his devotions towards Mecca. I am sure I hope both the prayers and the sugar may do him a very appreciable amount of good. My last thimbleful of brandy gone, too, and no more to be got nearer than Trebizond! Truly, there is a limit to enduring these long-coated men-at-arms and their campaigning ways.

BEHIND DELIBABA, *June 15th.*—If one could only believe one's ears, the prologue being long over, the serious business of the drama is about to commence. "The Russians are at Zadikhan," "The Russians have made a reconnaissance of Moukhtar's camp," which may mean anything—from a solitary officer spying it through a telescope from the top of a loftier mountain, to a demonstration in force; "There will be fighting to-day at Tortum, for they are going to force their way to Baiboort after all." These were among the rumours that crowded the air this morning. That Kars had lost a fort came as a matter of course, it has been a standing matin dish every day for a fortnight. But "Rumour painted full of tongues," had for once some basis to go upon in her chatter.

The Russians are at last on the move once more, and on this side we feel quite a sense of relief at the news, evil though it may prove to us. At the worst, the dreadful feeling of suspense is over, and we shall have something to do, if it is only to run from one position to another, keeping time to the music of the clattering of Cossack hoofs.

To-day, then, the Russians advanced towards the position which, as I wrote a fortnight ago, was to be newly

taken up on the south side of the Araxes ; and the Ottomans, nothing loth, prepared to receive them. But beyond a quite unimportant skirmish, in which, I believe, we took a solitary prisoner, and in which the enemy vainly attempted to turn our left by a mountain path, evening closed without a collision ; but the camp fires of both forces face one another, and I am bound to say that the Turks look like fighting—as, indeed, when could they fight if not now ?

Their position, if not the strongest, is very strong ; they have the Araxes rolling on their left, its difficult valley closed against the Russians by the Altyre Gedik, and another more western spur of the Koseh Dagħ. Our front extends to the mouth of the Pass of Tahir, and our right stretches along the mountain ridge of the Sheryan Dagħ ; though this must be understood to be theoretical rather than practical, for the troops there are small groups of Koord cavalry. We have several pieces of mountain artillery, and we have six Krupp guns of over three and under three and a half inches bore. I should be inclined to estimate our available troops here, and in front, at not more than 9,000 men all told, and I hope there may be as many.

MOUKHTAR'S CAMP OF SIVEN, *June 16.*—The sun was up early, but not earlier than the Osmanli troops under Mahommed Pacha, and even before this movements were visible in the Russian vicinity. Any tyro could tell that there was going to be a tussle, and as the result of that fight might be to lay all Western Armenia open to the enemy, all felt the exceeding gravity of the situation.

About four o'clock a column of the Muscovs was seen heading for the pass over the slight depression between the Scherian Dagħ and the Koseh Dagħ, and when they came into range, just before half-past five, they were warmly re-

ceived by two Ottoman battalions and by two Krupp guns. But as a matter of fact, it was the enemy who fired the first shot; and Her Majesty's Commissioner with this army, General Sir Arnold Kemball, riding forward to obtain a good view of the as yet distant commencement of operations, drew upon himself and his companion, Captain Charles Norman, the fire of the Russian batteries, whose shells were planted with much accuracy even at four thousand yards.

Soon after half-past five the action was pretty general, and the Russians had by six o'clock at least nine battalions engaged, with not fewer than seventeen guns, which number were, indeed, at one period all speaking at once. My impression is that they had thirteen full battalions and three complete eight-gun batteries, besides mountain pieces; but on this point it is impossible to speak with certainty. Our front at Toprah lies about six thousand feet above the sea level; the village of Möllah Suleiman, a little lower, occupies a site to the southward, and on the caravan road to Bayazid is Zadikhan. Hence the ground slopes up to the top of the Dagħ, at an elevation of some nine thousand feet,—slopes not, be it understood, gradually, but with plenty of undulation, and a good deal of cover from well-watered ravines and projecting spurs of greater or less magnitude.

From no one point is it possible to see the whole of the terrain over which the fighting went on; and from no one point could any fair idea be formed of what the general action was like. Battalion met battalion here and there over the area, which could not have been less than nine miles in depth, by eleven or twelve in length. The rattle of Berdan rifles was incessant, but no more prevalent than the replies of the Sniders and Martini-Peabodys from our

side. On both sides there was an enormous waste of cartridges, aim being taken, where it was taken at all, at impracticable distances ; but more frequently the great object of the men was to engage in a rapid firing competition, and get rid of as many shots as possible in a given space of time.

The casualties were very few in comparison with the continuousness of the fusillade ; but, on the other hand, the shell practice of the Russian Krupps and mountain guns was terribly precise. Missile after missile burst on the same spot, in a bit of an earthwork from which the Turks were keeping up a feeble and intermittent artillery fire. But right well did these raw troops on our side stick to their places. Veterans of many campaigns could not have behaved more coolly, and when there came, as there did too often, a gap in the ranks, it was closed up with wonderful *aplomb* and courage.

Nevertheless, as a rule, open fighting was observed, and where there was anything to find fault with, it was in the conduct of the officers. Indeed, it would not be going too far to say that there was hardly a regimental—or at any rate a company—officer in our ranks who was qualified to command a corporal's guard. The non-commissioned officers were the life and soul of the defence, but energy will not make up for want of head. I say nothing against the pluck of these sparse junior officers ; but they showed about as much knowledge of tactics, or of handling their men in the face of an enemy, as a chicken has of the causes of an eclipse.

On the other side there was an almost complete command of the men. Not only was every battalion well handled, but every company appeared to be just where it was wanted, and in the order in which it was wanted, at any moment. The utmost advantage was taken of cover, but there was no lack of steadiness in an advance over the

open when it was deemed advisable. On our side dozens of points were left unoccupied, when a section of men might have been thrown upon them with advantage ; and again, half a battalion was blocking itself where half a company would have been perfectly adequate to the work, and all, indeed, that could find shelter, as, for example, in a rifle pit behind the little river that is the chief western affluent of the eastern Euphrates. In spite of all blundering, however, for four hours the enemy made little or no way. They gained a lodgment here and there higher up the slope, but it did not serve them in the least. The Ottoman infantry held its ground with the utmost obstinacy until nearly ten o'clock, when the fire of a considerable portion of the line of defence suddenly slackened, and at the same time the troops began to be moved towards the right. There our line was as fully extended, save in one or two places, as we had men to hold the positions. Everybody had as much as he could do in front, for the Muscovs no sooner saw a pit slacken its fire than they took ground forward at that portion of the line.

To the right a little stream, with a wider ravine than usual in this mountain land, forces its way down from the Scherian Dag, whose dark face, here and there mottled by deep-lying snow pits, supplies a source that seldom fails, even in the hottest summer. The stream, however, this morning was a mere dribble. Yesterday's snow-water had run off, and to-day's had not come down. A couple of battalions of the sons of the Czar therefore found good foothold either in the bed of the stream or on the gently sloping sides. In a word, this little valley was perfectly practicable for a handful of agile and hearty men, and the two battalions sent on this duty having divided into two columns—at least so it seemed—one pressed forward by

each of the two rivulets from which the stream is fed. Good progress had been made before the movement was—I will not say noticed—but at least before any effectual attempt was made to check it. That it could have been checked and thwarted there is no doubt whatever, even with the men who were available, and in spite of an efficient artillery fire at a range of not more, certainly, than two thousand yards. But at the critical moment (11.35 a.m.) a shell killed Mahommed Pacha instantly, and—one of the evils of breechloaders—the Turks had no more ammunition ready for serving out.

It is almost incredible that a position occupied for nearly a fortnight, its natural strength largely increased by the resources of military art, its face seamed with rifle pits, and its crests giving shelter by sufficient earthworks for all the guns that the defence could find, should have been left with only a five or six hours' supply of cartridges, and some of the men had no more than twenty rounds when the fight began. I believe there was, and is, plenty of both the Snider and the Peabody cartridges at Delibaba, where Mahommed Pacha's body now lies buried. But it was not where it was wanted, partly, no doubt, from want of transport, but more especially from the want of foresight which has been so frequently conspicuous on this side during this brief campaign.

Yet the Russians lost so heavily that they were not able to follow up their decided advantage. Up till the time, about noon, that the Ottomans began to fall back, we had comparatively few casualties. The shells of the enemy did fair execution, but they wasted quite as much small-arm ammunition as we did. It was in the retreat from the pass to our base at Delibaba that our poor fellows caught it. Four battalions which had borne the brunt of the fighting in the

centre had, about ten o'clock, sent their baggage to the rear. In the very middle of the steep road on the western side of the pass this baggage was met by two battalions which had been hurried up from Keuprikeui—a part of the Erzeroum force of which I spoke in an earlier letter; and the pack horses of the two parties became inextricably mingled. There was really not room to pass; and before any sort of order could be restored, the dreaded Cossacks appeared on the hills above—some mounted, some on foot—and poured in on the disorganized and helpless mass a murderous fire.

Here the greatest credit is due to the men who had been in action during the day. They pulled themselves together and returned the fire as best they might, and with such few cartridges as they had left among them. And it is no discredit to the new arrivals from Erzeroum that, knowing nothing of what had been going on, and suddenly finding themselves exposed to a deadly fire from almost concealed assailants, they should have become panic-stricken. They fled here and there, poured back out of the defile towards Delibaba, some of them with, others without arms, but were re-formed without difficulty as soon as they were in the open. One of these new battalions was literally decimated; the other, being more in the rear, escaped with better fortune.

I cannot form a close estimate of the loss on either side; but I would not put it at more than 300 on ours, while that of the enemy, from the nature of the fighting, must be as large. And that they got quite as much as they wanted for the day may be estimated from the fact that the whole of the battalions engaged on this side got back in the course of the evening to Delibaba; while the Mushir here—whither I rode as soon as the struggle was over—assures me every gun of the Turkish division was safe in Delibaba or Taik-

hodja before midnight, when in simple weariness I must lay down my pencil.

June 17.—The result of yesterday's fight is less serious than we at first very naturally thought. The loss of the lieutenant-general commanding the division can be repaired, for the Mushir has ordered Reis Ahmed Pacha out from Erzeroum to take the command of the right centre, and this ferik has a reputation for prudence and skill. Nor is the loss of the pass a loss to the real strength of the position. The division maintains itself at Delibaba, which commands the mouth of the defile, and not a Russian of them all can cross the mountain range by either of three routes without being mowed down by the Delibaba guns.

I understand that the Mushir and his veteran chief of the staff do not consider it necessary, in consequence of yesterday's disaster, to take any steps further than to strengthen the right centre division by a few battalions, with some guns, if they can be got, and a regiment of Koord cavalry to watch the fords. I met these on my way here last night. They had not the least idea why they were being sent across the Araxes; but early this morning they were watching every possible movement of the enemy in the mountains, and a reconnaissance of a few squadrons of regulars showed that the Muscovs had not pushed their way any farther than yesterday, and did not indeed even hold all the ground they had occupied.

It is quite on the cards that Delibaba may be attacked in a day or two; but for the moment there seems no likelihood of any movement, some authorities appear to think, pending the fall of Kars. And if accounts which have reached this camp to-day can be trusted, the Russians are not by any means getting the best of it there, seeing that on Friday the garrison made another sortie and destroyed

the besiegers' works, the loss on the side of the latter being very severe and their line of enclosure broken in several places, so that our informants, who are Circassians, had no difficulty in finding their way out. But all this is as it may be.

Whatever may betide, the Mushir will not let anything slip for want of hard work on his own part, or for lack of drill on the part of his men. But one cannot, after yesterday, help observing that the junior officers have little part in the instruction that every other soldier off duty has to take his share of. Upon the non-coms. fall nearly all the work and the guidance, and between the brigadier and the sergeant-major there might as well, in some battalions, be no officer at all. How men are to be handled in the face of an enemy upon this plan passes my comprehension ; and we all know that the strength of any chain is only that of its weakest link.

This evening I have been a witness of a ceremony which has it is probable, no parallel in any other army in the world. Just before sundown about half the division—all the men who were not on duty of some kind or other—were assembled on their regimental parades without arms and marched to a general parade, where the men were formed in contiguous column at attention, and were presently addressed by a bey, acting as the representative of the commander-in-chief. His voice, clear and sonorous, could be heard clearly by every man on the parade, to the number of perhaps 8,500, who were frankly told the circumstances of yesterday's defeat, and it was explained to them that the falling back on Delibaba would probably not have taken place but for the singularly inopportune loss of the lieutenant-general commanding.

I do not know what may be the opinion held of such an

assemblage in the West, but to me it appeared an uncommonly sensible arrangement, and I must say that its effect on the men seems to be of the best. The occasion of the assemblage was seized to tell the troops that, as desertion was beginning to show itself among some of the newer levies, it has been resolved to make an example of some of the men who had been caught, *pour encourager les autres*, and that accordingly, during the next few days several deserters would be shot. Three flourishes having been sounded on the regimental bugles, a rolling cheer was given after each for sovereign and country, and the parade was there and then dismissed, the men finding their way back to their lines in such order as seemed good unto them.

June 19th.—Yesterday the first detachment of the Polish Legion arrived in this camp. In numbers it is not calculated to throw serious dismay into the ranks of the enemy, for there are but one officer with eighteen cavaliers, and thirty foot soldiers with two officers. They declare, however, that others will follow; and they lost no time in getting to work, for within two hours of reporting themselves at head-quarters half of them were off to Delibaba, on scouting intent. If they carry out a tithe of their programme, Loris Melikoff will have a bad time of it.

The Poles are always great at paper warfare, and one of the most deadly forms of the missiles which they have prepared for the foe, is a series of proclamations in the Russian language, to be distributed—heaven knows how—among the Russian army, with a view to stirring up strife, discontent, and mutiny, especially where Poles most do congregate in the invader's ranks.

In the uniform of the Polish officers, the invention of some Gallic tailor at Constantinople has been allowed to run riot. It is of a deep blue, with red Lancer

double-breast, and red facings, blue trousers with double red stripes, and a shako which looks very much like that of our Lancer regiments, razed by one-half and pounded for a few minutes under a Nasmyth hammer, so that it has assumed a permanent cock over the right temple. The ornaments are of gold and silver, and two Polish eagles in silver decorate the neck. Altogether the turn-out resembles rather that of the vivacious "gay young dog" of an aide-de-camp in some *opéra bouffe*, than an uniform designed for the wear and tear of a campaign.*

But a more important event, as regards the struggle that I seek to record, is the concentration ordered and effected yesterday of the Olti division on this camp. One cannot be always "speering at" the Mushir and the generals, and the first I knew of the movement, notwithstanding a long chat at a late hour the previous night, was the appearance of Faizy Pacha—lieutenant-general and chief of the staff—going with a lieutenant and a working party to lay out the lines for the incoming force.

Imagine a lieutenant-general or chief of the staff of an English army troubling himself with such deputy-assistant quartermaster's work! But the fact is, that everything here falls upon the executive chiefs. They have no control or intendance as a separate department; they have no junior staff officers, or next to none; and they have to do themselves the work that any junior field officer in the English army would think rather beneath him. They make no difficulty about it either; but I must say, it grated on me to see an experienced and accomplished general of seventy years engaged in such a task—a general, too, of great powers of conception and mastery of detail.

Soon after midday the head of the Olti column reached

* This was soon abandoned for the ordinary attire of a Turkish officer.

the centre plateau of the camp, and I rode over to meet it. On my way the reason was kindly explained to me why the Tortum and Olti district should be entirely denuded of troops. The fact is, the most complete scouring of the country has failed to find any Russian soldiers anywhere on this side of the Soghanly Dag, or even at some distance beyond that and its sister ranges north of the Araxes.

If on the withdrawal of our troops the Russians should again advance, and should make a step along the Djoruk valley or the Olti road towards Baiboort, we could in less than one day's march place 10,000 troops on their flank, without weakening the rest of our line to any dangerous extent. And here the Mushir has his men well in hand for use on either flank, while he has removed one of his best divisions from the malarious valleys of the Olti district, which had already begun to seriously affect the health of the men. Reschid Pacha, who has recently been placed in charge of this division, was nothing unwilling to change his quarters, and with a light heart led his troops towards the Mushir, who sent his principal aide-de-camp, Colonel Osman Bey, to meet the lieutenant-general.

I would that some of the superfine critics of autumn manœuvres had been with me yesterday to see a body of troops, open to every objection that amateur soldiering could suggest, and yet perfectly capable of doing, and willing to do, their duty.

The three battalions of the first brigade were very uneven in the ranks. The first two hardly exceeded in number the third; and, all told, the brigade did not reach as it stood 1,400 men. But then, at least 500 were detached in charge of pack-horses with equipage and ammunition, or had fallen out along the line of the seven hours' march, and straggled into camp in the course of the evening. The

first brigade was accompanied by one *canon de montagne*, borne with its carriage and ammunition on three mules, and speedily mounted as soon as the halt was sounded. The second brigade had some 1,300 in the ranks, with two mountain pieces and a like number of supernumeraries; and the third was of like strength, with one mountain gun. Roughly speaking, then, the division consisted of 5,000 men, every one of whom, in full marching order, carried weights that an English soldier would much and rightly grumble at. But the column, on the whole, came in as fresh and good-humoured from its midsummer march in a latitude of some forty degrees, as though it had been out for a Hyde Park evening field-day. There was nothing to prevent it going into action at a moment's notice; and ragged though its men were,—dusty, unkempt, unshaven, with half-rotten belts and wholly absurd foot gear,—any soldier would have been content to lead them anywhere.

The whole column was armed with Martini-Peabody rifles, taking American-made cartridges; and I was sorry to learn from some of the officers that “accidents” have been not infrequent, owing to the explosion of the cartridges in the act of closing the breech—accidents due in part to the protrusion of the cap over the plane of the base, and partly to the almost inherent defects of the Martini action. But the make of the cartridges is, on the whole, superior to that of our “bottle-necks,” and they resemble rather the solid-drawn cartridges of Westley-Richards than the laminated productions of Woolwich. Each brigade had about 200 pack animals, chiefly old horses, and about half of these carried ammunition boxes, of which the division had enough for a three months' campaign, with fighting three days a week.

After a rest on the plateau of a couple of hours, during

which these patient soldiers remained without food or water, the column was put again on the march, and headed for the quartier-général. The Mushir, with the chiefs of his staff, took up a position on foot on one side of a rivulet bed now dry, and reviewed the division which went by on the other, the band of one of the regiments, each of which consisting of four battalions, has one band, "playing them past" with lively, if not excellent, French music.

There was not a single fault, according to the Aldershot or Wimbledon standard, of which these troops were not guilty. Their "dressing" was execrable, their step not always true, their "distances" absurdly bad, their "sizing" simply conspicuous by its absence, and their whole *tenue* loose in the extreme. But for all that, I venture to say there was not a practical soldier on the ground who did not admire the column, and feel that it was none the worse for the absence of parade duties.

Yet that Turkish troops are capable of the very highest degree of training that any precisian could desire, we had a complete proof on the field in the 1st Regiment of Chasseurs, which served as a guard of honour. No English battalion ever brought its firelocks to the ground with a more even and sharp ring; and no regiment in any service ever marched on show days better, more evenly, with better defined distances, and with finer carriage than these fellows did as they returned to their quarters. I regret to add that the new arrivals had to sleep in the open all night, as their tents were taken during the Russian trip to Olti, a fortnight ago, and have not yet been replaced.

Just as I must close this despatch in order that it may catch the post at Erzeroum two days hence, the Mushir has ordered an advance in force towards the right; that is, by way of Khorassan to Delibaba, and we may have great

things in that direction in a day or two. I need only say that about 6,000 men have gone under Chahin Pacha, this afternoon, including 900 regular and irregular cavalry, and that our representatives in this camp—Captain MacCalmont, 7th Hussars, and Captain Trotter, R.E.—are now waiting the signal from the Mushir to proceed after the column which has just topped the rise between headquarters and the Araxes.

ERZEROUM, *June 21*.—Being compelled to become my own courier, owing to the fear of a servant to encounter the supposed dangers of the road, I have an opportunity of adding a postscript. We are in hourly expectation of a battle at or in front of Delibaba, to recover the ground lost by the death of Mahommed Pacha; and very early yesterday morning the Mushir, with only two attendants, privately and swiftly passed through Khorassan, on his way to the new centre of interest, whither the bulk of the troops which had left his camp on Tuesday had already preceded him.

Two or three times I have referred above to the reports from Kars. To-day I have received on official authority a confirmation of the news of a successful sortie last Friday. It appears that in the early morning the party making the sortie had the good fortune to find a superior party of Russians scattered about a hollow, in which they were unable for a long time to make any effectual resistance. Hardly one of them escaped, and the loss of the invaders must have been very heavy; it is put by Turkish authorities at thousands. The Ottoman loss was seventy killed and 200 wounded. And now comes a very serious charge. It is stated that the Russians the same morning accused the inhabitants of a village (one of the householders being Sir W. F. Williams's old Kars servant) close by, of having given

information to the Turks of the vicinity of the Russian victims, and taking no denial, stripped them all, men, women, and children, beat them, women included, with the Cossack whip until they were prostrate and bleeding, and then drove them, still naked, into the beleaguered city. The story would seem too horrible to be true, but for what we already know of Muscovite lenity in Poland, and how the Uniat Greeks were converted, as the last Polish Blue-book shows. I give the tale as it was told to me, merely adding that it could not possibly come from a higher source, and that the names of the unfortunate villagers are in the possession of Mushir Moukhtar Pacha. And yet we hear a good deal of Muscovite conciliation in Armenia ! *

On my way in I was glad to find that further preparations are being made for another stand, if necessary, at Keuprikeui, near the only big bridge in these parts, which is therefore regarded as a miracle of science and art, and has two names all to itself, for it spans the Araxes under the designation of Choban Keupri, or the Shepherd's bridge. The new works are close to, but slightly in advance of, those erected fifty years ago in the vain attempt to stop the advance of Prince Paskiewitch. There are several battalions here, and the works are well concealed and well placed, while there is one battery of field artillery.

Near Hassan Kaleh I met Ghazi Mehemet Pacha, a descendant of the renowned Schamyl, at the head of about 300 Circassians, bearing sacred banners; his excellency wearing the uniform of a general of division, and *en route* to Delibaba. I wish this fair-haired warrior, who has attained at a bound the rank as yet refused to a veteran like General

* This story was confirmed after the relief of Kars; and though there seems to be some doubt about the whipping of the women, there is none that they were stripped, and so sent to the Turkish lines.

Klapka, would take with him to the front the dozens of Circassians who, leaving the zaptiehs or mounted police to do military duty at the front, prowl about in the rear of the army, demanding to see by what authority country people travel. I yesterday saw two quiet countrymen pull out backshish for three of these ruffians as a matter of course ; but when the exhibition of a *laisser passer* did not satisfy them, and one of them wanted to know more about me and to seize my bridle, I presented him another passport in the shape of a revolver, and these three gallant creatures promptly took to flight, watching my progress afterwards from a safe distance until I had reached Hassan Kaleh. I must confess that the road is rather unsafe, but its safety is certainly not enhanced by the protection of these long-coated Tcherkesses.

CHAPTER V.

DELIBABA, *June 23*.—When, by the misconduct of a servant, I was compelled to become my own courier to Erzeroum, I fully expected that I should lose a battle, and surely enough was the anticipation verified. It was an instinct with me, that as soon as I was in Erzeroum, the two armies would be at each others' throats; and in very truth, one night with my clothes off—the first for a fortnight—was purchased by the loss of a fight that I would have given a good deal to have seen. Unfortunately, also, a foreign officer, on whom I could have depended for a full and vivid description of the struggle, had been invalided to the rear before I could get back to the front; but by the kindness of one of the Mushir's aides-de-camp, I am able to present a succinct outline of the doings of his excellency, who lost no time on his arrival in Delibaba on the 20th, in putting his force—eighteen battalions, two batteries, some mountain guns, and two regiments of irregular cavalry—in motion, and advancing through the Delibaba defile of steep red rocks to attack the Russians.

On Friday morning, at sunrise, the scouts reported unusual activity in the Russian advance guard, and of course our side was also on the *qui vive*; but several hours elapsed before a shot was fired, save in a very desultory manner. Soon after eight o'clock, however, a Russian column debouched from behind the eastern spur of the Koseh Dag, on which a portion of their camp lies, about two miles beyond the wretched village of Eshek Elias, or

Helias ; and at the same time a couple of four-pfund guns began playing upon the position to which Moukhtar had been foolishly allowed to advance up a steep slope, commanded by mountain roads all the way from Helias. This position consists of three lofty, rolling downs, commanding entirely the entrance to the pass which was taken from us the Saturday Mahommed Pacha was killed ; that is to say, this day week, though, practically, it seems a month ago.

If the generalship had been as good as the artillery fire on the Russian side, there would have been an end of proceedings in this particular quarter. Shell followed shell into the very same spot, where everybody took good care not to go ; and so the column advanced, until it was fully exposed on the hill-side to the fire of our lighter guns. That these did good service, could be seen easily enough by the wavering of the column, which, nevertheless, came on, opening out, and it was soon clear that its object was to advance up and secure the hills which formed the last buttresses of the Koseh Dagb on the north side of the Bayazid road.

Moukhtar had already provided against this *coup* by placing behind the brow of these hills a couple of battalions and two guns ; and he now sent Moussa Pacha, a general of brigade and a Circassian by birth, with three other battalions, giving him orders to advance his men and hold the ground at any cost. Moussa executed his task with promptness and skill, and five battalions were ready to receive the Muscovs when their column approached.

Meanwhile, the Russians brought forward more and yet more artillery, until they had at last no less than eighteen guns in full play, and at least eight battalions of infantry engaged ; while they attempted to reach and cut Moukhtar's centre with four regiments of Cossacks, and four or

five of regular cavalry. On these mounted troops the six Krupps and nine mountain guns of our centre played with great vigour, but still with no effect upon the pluck wherewith they advanced. Their movement in column under fire was perfection ; and if they had been adequately supported by infantry in open order, it is impossible to say what the consequence might have been. As it was, however, only two battalions followed up the enterprise of the horsemen, and ultimately the latter had to retire, threatened, at a very respectful distance, however, by two bodies—I can scarcely say battalions—of Koords, with their spears and their flint pistols, and three regiments of Circassians, who were not a bit more anxious to close with their ancient foes.

I should have expected, after the fight of last Saturday, that these Turkish troops would hardly again have wittingly faced the Russian guns ; but yesterday they held their own boldly against one of the hottest artillery fires that any one on the ground had seen, and they spread themselves well, too, so that from every point on the ground they held one or more rifles were aimed against the enemy. He, too, had long abandoned his close order, and came on in wavering style ; and the remains of the 18,000 men, with whom Tergukassof began to cross the pass a week since, were reduced still further below 15,000 ere the day was over.

The Turkish loss was not more than 80 killed, but I must put the wounded at as many as 600. Many of these—indeed, most of them—were hit in the hands and arms, showing that they had been well in cover ; and most of the killed lost their lives by the shell fire. On the other hand, while the Turkish artillery made fairly good practice, it was noticed that the Russian losses were chiefly caused

by the Peabody-Martins and the Sniders, of which here, as in England, the more experienced soldiers continue to speak very highly, though these Sniders are not converted "Enfields," but converted "Springfields."

It was not for want of persistency that the Russian general did not effect his point. He held on and on to the ground he had gained; but after the first hour or so, he did not increase his occupation. By noon, both sides were so well satisfied, that the affair might have ended there and then; but the Russians appear to have under-estimated Ottoman tenacity, and to have believed that if they only waited, the Turks would retire before them. And so for two hours more they hammered away with their artillery, making now and again fine spurts with their cavalry, more than once actually round the Mushir's centre. But all to no purpose.

The Turks, who had altogether sixteen battalions engaged, with about 3,000 very inferior cavalry of one sort or another, held their own most doggedly, acting all the time strictly on the defensive, and did not even seek to press the Russian retreat, when, at four o'clock, success being evidently hopeless, the Muscovite lines began to give way. The reason alleged—namely, that the Russians are strongly entrenched on their own ground on the higher level—may or may not be sufficient; it remains all the same the fact that while to a Circassian brigadier must be ascribed the honour of the day, the Circassians themselves prudently left the Russians to get back to their camp as they might, covered by their artillery and cavalry, and only slightly harassed by the too weak artillery at Moukhtar's command.

It is difficult, but it is by no means impossible, to exaggerate the defects of the Ottoman army, and if conversa-

tion here bears any affinity to correspondence sent home, a very exaggerated picture of our force in Asia will be presented to the British public. Troops, who could behave as the Turkish troops did yesterday, may be ragged and dirty—and more ragged and dirty troops never took the field—but they have in them the true heroic quality, and the excellence of the men goes far to make up for the want of skill and experience of the junior officers. Those of the artillery seem to be a good deal better in every way than the captains and lieutenants of the line, and the latter can only be depended upon when under the immediate eye of their brigadier; nor always then. But things are bad enough, without being made worse, and it is exaggerating, or blindly trusting in reports manufactured for the Græco-Armenian market, to say, as I believe has been said, that the Russian troops have bivouacked within five miles of Khorassan, or that the Cossack cavalry have penetrated as far as Keuprikeui. Had they done so, I fancy few of them would have got back safely to the friendly shelter of the Koseh Dag, which they seem highly to appreciate, as well they may after their reception of yesterday.

The rear still continues to be infested with stray Circassians, of whose annoyances and extortions the inhabitants of the villages sorely, and with good right, complain. They monopolise accommodation, too often even to the exclusion of wounded men, but nothing puts them to flight like the name of an Englishman. Every subject of our gracious Queen here is supposed to be on the footing of intimate personal friendship with the Mushir, and it is a delusion that for the purposes of a moral police ought to be cultivated. It will be bad times for the first Tcherkess I fairly catch at his nefarious work, since he will certainly be promptly haled before his excellency. But really it is too bad that these

fellows should not be kept better in hand, and I believe the army would be the stronger in every way if these impostors (for collectively they are another fond illusion gone) were sent back with celerity to their settlements at Sivas, in Asia Minor, and on the sea of Marmora; for they have always, as yet, failed to do aught but bring us stray news from Kars and hang back in the battlefield. Their wild plunges when a shell comes near them are amusing, and if it were not for Moussa Pacha—who has been sent by the Mushir on the mission of attempting to cut the Russian communications near the Soghanly Dagħ—one might ban the whole race without any great fear of committing an injustice. Mehemet Ghazi wants to be sent with his men to “relieve Kars.” Most people here will be quite content if the Tcherkesses do go upon this Quixotic mission, or any other, so long as it has as a result to relieve us of themselves.

SHERYAN DAGH, *Midsummer-day*. — “Which is the properest day to fight?” to slightly modify the words of the old tippling song. Christian nations have ever shown a pleasing preference for Sunday when at all convenient, and Moslems are, as we have seen, not above sacrificing a portion of their sacred Friday when engaged in mortal combat with their fellow-man. But here, this blessed Sunday and Midsummer-day, sitting on a spur of the Koseh and Sheryan mountains, with snow lying hundreds of feet below us, and yet under a heat so great that the ink dries in the pen before one single sentence can be completed, I am listening to the only occasional bang of a twelve-pounder and the reply of a Muscovite sixteen, with now and again the crack of a Martini-Peabody a mile away at some, to us unseen, foe.

It is but slow work this—sitting behind six or seven mountain guns, and waiting for *Messieurs les Russes*;

slow, but in terribly deadly earnest all the same; slow, albeit we are in the midst of scenery at which the artistic world might well wax frantic; slow, though we may be every one prisoners of war before yon sun, just now beginning to veil his splendour behind a bank of thunderclouds springing up from the southward, has tinted the snow-peaks once again with rosy beauty ere he hides from our sight; slow, although the suspense and anxiety to know what the Muscovs are doing on our right and left are intense.

We are perforce idle—waiting, like Mr. Micawber, for something to turn up. I have no one to talk to, for the *attachés* have gone westward. I am the only correspondent on the ground, so far as can be discovered; and the few members of the staff who alone speak any Western tongue have too much to think of for general, or indeed, any conversation. But it is quite clear that the Russians, so far from agreeing with those critics who jumped to the conclusion that yesterday week's battle was a settler, find our present position so strong as to need very careful approach.

I have ridden at least eight miles along the front of our lines, on this side, of course, of the great ridge which lies south and east of us, without finding any Russian movement. Anything for a change; even a Muscov shell plump in our midst, so long as it did nobody any harm.

One shot every twenty minutes, however, hardly keeps the attention quick; and we would all languish into sleep if somnolence were not, under the circumstances, certain death or capture. And as the Russians have, if we may believe our ears, offered a price for any Englishman in the Turkish lines—from General Kemball and Captains Trotter and MacCalmont, who represent the Crown, down to the correspondents and artists who represent only public

opinion—we have all every reason to keep on the alert ; at least I do not care just now for a pilgrimage to Moscow by way of Tiflis.

Our scouts take pot-shots at anything they fancy to be a Muscov. For the rest, we might be on Brighton Downs on an Easter or a Whitsun-Monday, waiting for a mimic fight among the metropolitan volunteers.

Our position remains precisely what it has been for some days. The Russians hold the Koseh Dagħ and two of the three spurs which run to south and east therefrom. We hold the other spur and the slopes towards Delibaba. A narrow valley only divides our lines—a valley across which we might exchange artillery fire all day and all night long, if it were likely to do either side the slightest good or harm.

But we can sit under the burning sun and look at one another through our field-glasses ; we on our side envying the Russians their well-appointed camp equipage, for we have not a tent save three within eight miles, and the Mushir sets his men an excellent example by living under the canopy of heaven by night and by day, existing on the same poor fare of hard biscuit steeped in dirty water ; for every one of the little streams hereabouts is naturally foul, and the vicinity of an army has made them all unutterably disgusting. The men and officers alike have had nothing except biscuit, and but bare allowance of that, for four days ; and yet they keep in good spirits, and are hearty in their work. The country on this side of Delibaba, which is eight miles from where I sit, is entirely denuded of flocks and herds, of poultry, of milk, and eggs ; and I flatter myself that a few tins of sardines I had the good luck to find in Erzeroum have been appreciated up here.

A prisoner was brought in this afternoon by some Circassians—nothing loth to be captured, I take it. He is a raw-

looking lad of eighteen or nineteen, wearing a dark uniform with red facings, and the number on his shoulderstraps had been obliterated. The Mushir examined him personally; but I would not give much for all the information gained from him. His lack-lustre eyes did not look as if they were in the habit of making accurate observations; and the best thing we could learn from him was that a part at least of the Russian force is armed with bolt-guns of the oldest pattern, and very much worn and knocked about. In the weapon he carried there were several defects, and it would have been of very little use at Wimbledon, for the slide of the back sight was gone. The bayonet was the old three-cornered article, which still seems to hold its own against swords, trowels, saws, and all the other fancy forms that bayonets have lately assumed. The youth was sent off to Erzeroum with an order that he should be well treated, and a sergeant of cavalry seemed to be exceedingly well pleased with the task of conducting him to the rear, in the hope, probably, of getting something good to eat there.

HELIAS, *June 25*.—Another blank day! Up at five after a night in a Koord village almost obscenely dirty, without a stick of wood for a fire to be obtained even by money, without the possibility of grain, hay, or even chopped straw for the horses, and with every chance of being suddenly awoke by a troop of Cossacks (for the village lies outside our lines, though not far beyond the posts), and now it is sunset, and we are "as we were." Absolutely nothing has occurred all day, if we may except a suspicion of a flanking movement to the north of the Koseh Dagh, and therefore towards the Araxes, but this would be to leave the Russian communications at our mercy, and our adversaries are not quite such fools as that. We have also been expecting to hear from Moussa Pacha and the four Krupp guns sent,

with one mountain piece, to support his efforts in the Soghanly or Kanly Dagħ direction ; but we have just heard that he has gone no farther than Khorassan, as an advance of Russians in that direction is vaguely reported. I have therefore been passing the greater part of the day with our western and southern outposts ; and although the white tents of three Russian battalions still dot the hillside like flecks of new-fallen snow, the best glasses can make nothing of any movements other than the routine of a well-ordered camp.

Our Circassians and Koords continue to exchange shots at intervals with Tergukassoff's sentries, and one of the former boasts this evening that he was thirty-four times fired at to-day without being hit, either in himself or his horse. There is no direct necessity to believe him, and I for one don't.

The return of some of our scouting parties at sunset from the eastward gave the Muscovite artillerists an opportunity, of which they were not slow to avail themselves, of keeping their hands in. Accordingly they practised on the few horsemen with half a dozen shells, which might have been reserved for an occasion on which they would have done greater damage, the present results being simply *nil*, while two of the Russian artillerymen are reported to have fallen before the aim of one of our men with a Peabody. And so, it may be supposed, progress and civilisation have taken one more step.

June 26.—And in the Russian sense they have—backwards. While we were indulging yesterday in enforced laziness, our former centre—now our left—was the scene of a long, desperate, and bloody struggle. If one had only the enviable faculty of Sir Boyle Roche's famous bird, and were thus able to be in two places at once, what a busy

life a correspondent would lead! As the *locale* of the fight, however, is five-and-twenty miles by the map, and close on forty by any road, from this point of interest, it is needless to say my knowledge of it is second-hand; but as it is derived from official sources it may, I think, be trusted.

You know that Moukhtar withdrew his Olti division, and on Friday last he received information that the Russians were again entering on possession of that district. But instead of replacing Redschid Pacha's division at Olti, as he might have done in seven hours' march, and although the lines of Olti offer a triple array of defensible hills, the Mushir judged it on the whole best, if the Muscovs were bent upon trying their strength in that direction, to allow them to run their heads against his well-fortified camp at Siven, which I have partially described in previous letters. It occupies a lofty and isolated table-land to the north of the Araxes valley, and is between Khorassan and Bardez, though much nearer the former place. At various points elevations of the terrain afford advantageous positions for artillery, the dozen Krupps that the camp possesses, in addition to a few mountain guns, being disposed over the whole so as to command every portion of the plateau and its approaches. Besides this, the whole of the brows of the table-land were seamed with rifle pits, so wide that the men could fire comfortably, sitting, the favourite position in Turkey.

Short of a regular fortification, it is difficult to imagine anything presenting more obstacles than this entrenched camp; and why Melikoff should give orders to attack it fairly passes comprehension, unless he thought that the bulk of the troops in it had been withdrawn to defend this position. But, as you know, no more men left the camp last week than were brought into it; and one is forced to

the conclusion, either that strategy is not the Russian strong point in this neighbourhood, or that their information had been very misleading.

Be this as it may, yesterday morning the Muscovs showed themselves in force on the Bardez and Meshingerd roads, which approach in two directions, or rather from the same direction in two branches, one over the mountains and descending in a line that would be, as I remarked to an English officer the other day, splendid for artillery practice in judging distance, since for two miles it curves in full view down the mountain side. The other creeps along the base of the same mountain from the left, and it was here that the infantry made their heading ; while at the same time three guns came into sight on the upper road. But they were not unexpected. The Turks are culpably careless, as it seems to an Englishman, in evening and night patrols. They generally settle the question by omitting altogether to have them ; but they make up for this negligence by sending out their Koords very early in the morning.

Faizy Pacha, who really commanded,—Koord Ismail being the nominal head in the Mushir's absence,—knew of the Russian approach two hours before the column appeared ; but the scouts fell back, according to orders, without firing, and no doubt the Muscovs thought they had caught the Ottomans napping. But they soon found their error ; for as the column opened out into the wide valley which bounds one side of the table-land,—a valley of meadows and streams,—it was received with a perfect hurricane of fire, not only from the heights, but from the slopes. The Russians, however, succeeded in establishing themselves at the bottom of the ravine leading into this valley, where the ground being very broken, they could

find a reasonable amount of shelter ; and, from the terrace-like nature of the slopes, they were able, by slow degrees and at some sacrifice, to steal slowly upwards, until after two hours they were fairly on the table-land, that is to say, perhaps two battalions were, or what was left of them.

But if this had been the only Russian attack, it would have been merely child's play to dispose of it. Melikoff, however,—or if he remained at Kars, his representative,—had another shot in his locker. A smaller, but still a strong column approached the camp from the eastward, and a portion of it even got round to the ravines on the southward. This second column, so far as could be made out, had only two heavy guns with it, and their fire was by no means efficient ; so that the mountain pieces and the two Krupps which were on the southern angle of the camp were perfectly able to hold body No. 2 in check, while Faizy's rifle pits prevented any lodgment on the slopes, which served as a glacis.

But by nine o'clock—the attack began as early as seven—here and there the Muscovs had made head and got a footing on the main platform of the camp ; never in such strength, however, as to be dangerous. Again and again, it is said ten times in all, they tried to ascend, and it is allowed on all hands that no troops could have behaved better than “the children of the Czar” in the eleven or twelve infantry battalions engaged, and on whom fell the brunt of the struggle ; for the cavalry who had cut the communication with Keuprikeui and Khorassan could not, owing to the nature of the ground, act with any effect, and the artillery was for a greater part of the day throwing shells by guesswork on to the plateau, and that at a range so great as to be all but absurd.

However, the flatcaps persevered. They had little or no

chance from the first, but that they did not know, and they held on to whatever ground they took with bulldog tenacity, actually in two places, so I am assured, throwing up shelter trenches while under a heavy fire of both rifles and mountain guns. But as at Helias on Friday, so at Siven on Monday, after the first hour or two no progress whatever was made.

Behind breastworks, or in rifle pits, at any rate, the Turks are quite a match for the invader; and after a few weeks of this sort of thing, they will not be far behind them in the open field, though it will be long before they learn to come into action, like the Russians, with such beautiful regularity that, from a parade point of view, old soldiers are struck with admiration. There is just a question, however, whether this machine-like style does not cost a good many lives that a more scrambling system would save. There is no doubt it gives immense confidence to the men, both in themselves and in their officers. And I hear that their organization for promptly dealing with the wounded is worthy of all praise.

The battle lasted all the day, and even at six o'clock in the evening the two forces—estimated, the invaders at 18,000, and the Turks at 16,000—continued to wage what, by that hour, had become no longer a doubtful encounter.

As early as four o'clock the second Russian column had been withdrawn from the south side of the camp, and barely held its own on the flank, waiting, indeed, as was pretty obvious, an opportunity of retiring, and taking various small steps by degrees to get safely away. But the first column fought to the last, as if it were just freshly engaged, and only fell back into the valley and to the mountain road leading from Bardez when the sun had

gone down nearly an hour, and when the full moon was found to yield an insufficient light for fighting.

The Turks were not to be drawn from their entrenchments by any hope of harassing the retreating enemy, who lost frightfully, as I learn. Indeed, everybody in the camp expected the attack to be renewed with daylight this morning. But it was not so,—save a few artillery shots,—and the presumption is that the Russians have seen reason to regret an attack on the Turkish position without a force so numerically superior as to carry everything by sheer weight of numbers.

It is impossible to arrive at anything like an estimate of the losses on either side. Five hundred killed and wounded will not be an exaggerated return when the Ottoman lists come to be made out, if ever they are compiled; and burial parties were working until daylight in disposing of the slain under rough cairns on the bare mountain sides. The Russians are said by our folks to carry off their dead as well as their wounded, so that any estimate from this quarter must be the merest guesswork. But considering the ground fought over, the length of the fight, and the obstinacy of the Turks at every point, it may be presumed that the enemy lost two or three men to our one; and, if so, we have another hecatomb at the altar of Muscovite civilisation.

It is suspected in our camp this evening, by a council of generals, that to-morrow, or in two days at furthest, we shall have a simultaneous attack at Siven and Helias, accompanied probably by a great demonstration of cavalry, so as to cut our line. With this possibility in view, all our horse, save a few for scouting, have been sent off to-night towards Khorassan. And when Cossack and Circassian meet, I for one have little doubt that the latter will soon

cry "Enough!" But if I may set my poor judgment against that of the pachas, I would say, that because this seems the natural thing for the Russians to do, therefore it will not be done.

There is a manifest want of cohesion and common ground of action among the Russian commanders, and it is even rumoured that there is much jealousy in their councils. How this may really be we cannot say; but if it exists, it explains much that cannot be otherwise accounted for.

Our men were in clover to-day, when a drove of sheep arrived and enabled them to have the first meal of meat they have enjoyed for a fortnight. Of course draught bullocks are continually arriving with biscuits or ammunition, but they are sacredly reserved for the transport of wounded or invalided men to the rear, and are not available for soup. I do not know that it would have been a bad time for the Muscovs to try our mettle while these sheep, with tails as big as their heads, were being dressed and eaten, for it would have been hard to have dragged away the men from the kettles which simmered on the brushwood and furze fires that alone could be procured. And now, as one of the sergeant-majors said, the men are good for another fortnight. Verily, "a contented mind is a continual feast."

I should not be doing my duty if I were to fail in conveying the deep sense of disappointment and annoyance that has been occasioned among the officers of this army by a brief telegraphic report, that has appeared in some of the Constantinople papers, of two speeches delivered at Merchant Taylors' Hall, by Lords Derby and Salisbury. The telegram is not ten lines long, and is very possibly misleading; but their lordships are alleged to have said that England's supreme interest in the Orient is

peace. This is interpreted to mean, that under no circumstances would our country interfere with Russian doings in Turkey, short of the capture of Constantinople. And I can assure you that the feeling is, in consequence, bitter in the extreme. It is said that England has too long used Turkey as the catspaw against Russian aggression, and that she now throws her aside as having served her turn. One of the most prominent officers here expressed this feeling to me very curtly. His excellency said, that if England chooses to stand on one side, a mere spectator of the fight, she cannot and must not expect Turkey to pay the smallest attention to her interests when the terms of peace come to be arranged; and he added, that if by the cession of the left bank of the Tigris peace could be made, England would only have herself to blame for Russia getting a footing on the Persian Gulf. The feeling that we have deserted Turkey may be absurd, but it prevails widely, and it is not calculated to improve the position, or increase the facilities accorded to Englishmen out here.

In crossing from our southern to our eastern outposts this afternoon, I was a witness of an amusing incident, that is, however, not unexampled. Four Koords were out scouting along the riverine valley below us to the eastward, and were advancing very slowly and cautiously up a bit of a hill. On the next hill was a small Russian post of perhaps eight or ten men, who were keeping a good look out behind a low wall of loose stones, for the moment the turban of the leading Koord showed over the sky line of the hill, a couple of rifles were discharged at it. Again and again did the Koords tempt their foes, and at last they actually dressed up a couple of spears with their poor rags, and kept bobbing them up and down so as to attract the attention of the Muscovs. At least fifty shots must

have been taken at the Koords and their clothes, and once a spear was hit and splintered, if I may judge from the effigy coming rapidly to the ground. But meanwhile, two ragged Koords had crept round the hill on the left flank of the unsuspecting Muscovs; saw all they wanted to see, whatever it was, and as a crowning insult discharged at the Russians their absurd flint-lock pistols before retiring to their horses. The whole affair lasted upwards of an hour; and for once I admit the Koords had the laugh on their side. Their coolness was extraordinary; and as they galloped in they showed their white teeth, Koord fashion, very much as though they had a good story to tell if ever they returned to winter hearths.

CHAPTER VI.

HELIAS, *June 27*.—Probably never were two armies nearer to a great battle than the Russians and Turkish divisions watching each other in the Tahirkeui Pass were to-day, and yet they were prevented from indulging in a good set-to, how it is difficult to say. The morning opened listlessly. Here and there a Tcherkess or a Koord snapped his pistol or his Winchester repeater to show what a clever fellow he is. It is incredible, save to the test of eyesight, the quantity of ammunition that is wasted, and the number of false alarms that are given, by these mounted gentry. And it seems to be quite impossible to stop the practice of firing off pistols and rifles out of pure wantonness and high spirits. Unless we hear half a dozen shots at least running, we never think of paying the smallest attention to them, and say, "Oh, it's only a Koord," if, indeed, we take the trouble to say that.

A medical man here yesterday had a narrow escape from a Winchester bullet fired by a Tcherkess at a magpie, for the missile, glancing off a stone, struck this gentleman on the instrument case slung over his shoulder, luckily stopping there. So in the grey of the morning and on till about nine o'clock all save the popping of pistols was quiet. Then, in a moment all was bustle, and yet every effort was made to conceal any movement from the enemy. Groups sat or strolled about the crest of the ridges which we hold opposite the Muscovs, and one or two persons lit a fire and pretended to cook something. But behind the

ridges troops were being shifted with some rapidity, and every morsel of baggage was mounted on pack-horse or araba in the smallest possible space of time.

Chihan Pacha,—a most courteous and cultured gentleman, a thorough soldier, and, be it known to brethren of the mystic tie, a Mason to boot, who has hitherto commanded on the extreme right of the position, because from thence the movements of the enemy could be best watched by one whom the Mushir can trust,—was moved with his strong brigade of five battalions first to the centre and then to the left, his place on the right being taken by Colonel Haki Bey with two battalions. We had thus eight battalions on the left just over the Russian lines, five on the centre or near it, and two on the right; while our guns were thus distributed—two on the right, five on the advanced post of the centre, and five on the three hills of the left, with six mountain guns on the centre, but commanding the left, and four others distributed here and there over our left. The reason of all this was not far to seek, for half the division knew what was going to be done, and why.

It seems, then, that after the conference of generals mentioned in my last—it appears it is wrong to call it a council, though why it is not clear—information reached Reis Ahmed Pacha, who was left in charge on the Mushir's return to Sevin, that the Russian division in front of him was being weakened, with a view of strengthening the Russian right for a further attack on the Siven Camp; and this morning the reports of the earlier scouts tended to confirm the news. So the lieutenant-general determined on a reconnaissance in force, to test the question practically; and inasmuch as this might at any moment precipitate an engagement, every precaution was taken as if we were being attacked.

The whole of the Circassians and the regular cavalry left in the camp numbered hardly six hundred sabres, but about this strength was got together and despatched on a long round between nine and ten o'clock, so as to cross the broad valley in our front at a distance, and manœuvre among the broken ground of the snowy range forming the link between the Koseh Dagh and the Sheryan Dagh, down towards the enemy's lines. By eleven o'clock this handful of horsemen, with two light guns, had got away on the left front of the Russian position; but those who hold it are as likely to be caught asleep as a weasel.

With promptness a strong battalion was drawn out on the broad slope that bounds their line on the left, and in a few minutes this force was doubled by stragglers who went up the slope from the camp like bees going out from a hive in search of honey in the "purple light of dawn." Another battalion was thrown out along the valley to the southward, and very soon this had the measure of our cavalry, and dropped among them—at a long range, and without any great effect—a couple of rounds per man of the two leading companies. Meanwhile, the Russians had been compelled to get their whole force under arms, and it was speedily seen that if the division had been reduced, it was at most by one or two battalions, besides the cavalry.

As an attack on their strongly-entrenched position would in such a case have been madness, and as the object of the reconnaissance had been fully effected, the cavalry retired at half-past eleven with only six wounded, none seriously, and the two sides remained watching each other for an hour. At length the band of horse having been seen completely out of danger, our men proceeded quietly to drill, their "custom always of an afternoon," though in this case some three hours earlier than usual. And by two all

was again quiet within our lines, though the baggage has not been unloaded.

It is impossible not to praise the arrangements on both sides to-day. The Russians were taken at the very time of day an army is least fit for prompt work, namely, while dinner was being got ready, and yet they went out as if they had been warned for hours, and were as steady as if on parade in the Nevskoi Perspective. On our side the work was loose, but well done. In fact, we had here once more, as before in this war, the contrast between the French and the German systems as clearly cut as ever it was in Alsace or on the Loire. At a distance our men would be easily taken for French chasseurs and linesmen, and only the kepis, at a like range, indicate that the infantry opposed to us are not children of Preussenland or Swabenland.

As regards the execution of our scheme, there was nothing to find fault with, save that in the company work the defects of the junior officers again stood exposed, though they were not actually under fire. They simply do not know their duties, and they would be plucked if trying for a sub-lieutenant's certificate by any competent volunteer adjutant. Where the Turks manage to lay hold on fairly good men for the superior commands, it is difficult to see, when the run of their regimental officers are so singularly inefficient. The military college at Constantinople must be their only source of supply.

I have mentioned once or twice before that a portion of the Armenian population is disaffected, and to-day I have had a curious unintentional confirmation of this fact. In talking with one of the medical officers, I happened to say to him that he did not converse like a Turk. "Non," said he, "*je suis Ottomane et Armenian, mais je ne suis pas*

Russien." I think that *mais* deserves to be put on record. By the way, the same officer assured me that yesterday in the twenty-four hours the temperature ranged on what the men call "the Mushir's hill"—for, as I have said, until yesterday forenoon, when he returned to Siven, he lived there in the open day and night—from 3° Centigrade, that is, about 38° Fahrenheit, to 54° Cent., or 129° Fahr., of course in the sun; and from my own experience of day and night in these mountains, I can well believe it.* How trying these changes must be to the men is pretty obvious. To-day a few tents arrived; but whether Reis Ahmed Pacha will allow them to be pitched remains to be seen.

ZADIKHAN, PLAIN OF ALASHGUERD, *June 29.*—So much had been written sitting on the mud floor of a Koord in which a Kerry peasant would maybe house himself, but not his pig—little thinking I should send a telegram yesterday evening from the Plain of Alashguerd—when a couple of Koords rushed in, gesticulating violently and shouting "Muscovs!" and "askier!" the latter word meaning army. More I could not get out of them, and so, scraping together a few odds and ends of food into a saddle-bag, and remounting my already tired horse, I began spurring up to the Mushir's hill. It was untenanted! Riding round it I found the Russians gone, and only two battalions and the baggage of our own army in sight. And yet barely two hours had elapsed since I left the hill, and it was now no more than half-past seven o'clock. Away, helter-skelter after them! There was some difficulty in passing the rear-guard, but my papers soon settled that, and within an hour I had come up with the staff. All was

* On one subsequent occasion the difference of temperature in twenty-four hours was reported as equal to 104° Fahr.

then made plain in an instant. The reconnaissance had indeed been ordered to try the strength of the Russians on the rumours of the morning, but it had a deeper meaning as well, which was not let out.

In one of my earlier letters I pointed out that, in the opinion of competent judges, the true Russian strategy was a long flanking march round by the Lake of Van, while holding all Turkey's then available force at bay on the line of the Soghanly and Koseh mountains. And the first time I had the honour of a chat with Faizy Pacha, chief of the staff, I put forward this view as that of wiser heads than mine.

What the Russians have neglected to do, the Turks have done, and done in a fortnight, and done well and done cleverly. They had but five battalions of infantry, and only a few mountain guns to spare; but they had plenty of cavalry of a sort, and they divided this force under Faick Pacha into two branches, sending both, however, by Killi towards Van, but separating them at Melasgerd.

With the one they retook Bayazid I believe on Sunday; but as I have no information about this operation, I must leave it with a bare mention. The other brigade—if I may venture to use the term—went by the northern arm of the Murad, or Eastern Euphrates, towards Jevranos. Nothing had been heard from this force for several days, but it was judged that by yesterday its march would have been completed, allowing liberally for all probable accidents.

The calculation was right, and the brigade was threatening the Russian base by Wednesday afternoon. Probably mis-judging its strength, and in any case acting with a promptness suggestive of hurry, General Tergukasoff ordered a retreat. I shall give reasons for believing that he could have held his own, even had the Bayazid force been added to that of Van. But be that as it may, he

was on the move, and Reis Ahmed Pacha had not lost a moment in getting after him.

You have already been told of the strength of our position in front of the defile at Helias. It was, I believe, tenable against anything like an equal force, but against a greatly superior force it would have been untenable. The Russian position in the defile might have defied an army five-fold the strength of this division in an attack from the front. Its face covered three low hills, none of them quite commanded from our side, and yet each of them commanded and supported by succeeding eminences on its own side. The two roads by which alone the pass could be approached wound round or over these hills, and behind were twelve miles of narrow pass with only two side approaches, and these easily taken care of by one battalion and a couple of guns between them, for they are both narrow and steep.

Each of the three hills spoken of was provided with earthworks, not on a large, but, considering their position, on a sufficient scale; and, in addition to these, a number of rough stone walls, put up by cattle herds for shelter to themselves or their fires, made capital breastworks for infantry. And the slope of the crest of the hills gave in each case just the necessary amount of cover to the gunners, while allowing full play to the guns thereupon placed. Thus a front attack would have been costly in the extreme, and could hardly have been successful; and a flank attack was in the nature of things impossible.

Yet this position was given up because a handful of irregular cavalry and a few raw infantry, who had never seen a shot fired in anger, appeared near the rear. I do not know what the mature judgment of strategists may be upon the matter, but to me it seems that the Russian commander

acted with undue precipitancy. On the other hand, all credit must be given to Moukhtar Pacha for both the conception and the execution of the flank attack from Van. I take the Bayazid recovery to have been an afterthought. Had the force been a little stronger, the idea would have been perfect and perfectly carried out ; but the Mushir did the best with the materials available, and the result is all he could desire. Great military reputations have been achieved by smaller feats.

The Russians began to move about five o'clock, but it was nearly six before their intention was fully realised. This gave them an hour's start, but there still remained three hours of daylight ; and in three hours much may, with energy, be done. However, the Russian superiority in artillery—from first to last they showed some thirty guns—enabled them to retire through the pass from hill to hill, no matter how hardly they were pressed. When there was any difficulty about shifting the guns one step to the rear, the front was immediately covered by a curtain of cavalry, and it was amongst these that the Turkish artillery—very well served on the whole—did the greatest damage. I counted fourteen horses dead in the pass. And, by the way, in an hour or so after they fell, not one of these horses had much skin left on his body, for the hides were taken by the Turkish soldiers piecemeal, to make buskins withal. So—

“Refluent through the pass of fear the battle's tide was poured,”

and the Koord peasants, who gathered in the rear of the army, as vultures are said to do, soon disposed of the dead in pits dug in the peat that lies between the mountains. In one of these great graves there were five Turks or Circassians, all nearly stripped, but, I am bound to say, with

their faces decently covered. In another, twenty-three Russians, treated, I am told, with equal respect.

Twelve hours after the hostile legions had swept through the pass, not by a button, a stray bullet, a piece of shell, a cartridge case, a shred of uniform, or a dead soldier, could a casual passer-by have told, by looking at the ground, what had occurred during the evening and the twilight of Wednesday night ; and, but for a few crows and kites, and eagles circling above the dead horses, one who had not seen the struggle might be excused for not believing that any fight had taken place at all.

And there was nothing like a hand-to-hand combat throughout. The nearest approach to it was when a gun was hurried up on our side about the middle of the pass, before the rear-guard of the enemy had quitted the spur on which it was placed ; but even here both parties held their hands, and the Russians were allowed to retire with but the one gun playing upon them, and it only got in two shots before the battalion was in shelter. Nor, going over the ground shortly after, did I find any mortal effect from those two shells. The fact is, Reis Ahmed Pacha showed throughout a very prudent and a very proper self-restraint. It would have been easy to have sacrificed his own men and slaughtered a few hundred Russians ; but soldiers are too precious to Turkey just now to be lightly risked, and anything like heedless exposure of them would have been highly censurable under all the circumstances.

The greatest slaughter was within two miles of the original position, where there had been a Cossack camp, and where the pass opens out into a semi-oval and sloping piece of peat, intersected by two tiny streams which, it is needless to say, had been trampled into black mud. Here the cavalry first came out to cover the rear-guard, and here,

notwithstanding the failing light, the Turkish guns did deadly work. The peasants report twenty-three dead here. I can speak to nine, and that without leaving the roadway. Most of them were shorter men than I should have looked for ; but, to say the truth, I did not stop to inspect too closely, and yet I saw enough of the horrors of modern shell wounds to last me for the remainder of my life. In one poor fellow the shell of a mountain gun had burst right in the middle of the chest, and words would fail to tell of that awful spectacle. A chestnut horse lay close by with the top of his head laid open between the ears ; probably the same missile had slain both the steed and his master. But it is enough to have seen such things ; it is too horrible to write about them. More horrible is it to tell, as an officer informs me, that for some mysterious purpose the Koords have to-day disinterred every corpse.

Some ten miles further there lies on the side of a hill a little cemetery, in which, during their fortnight's tenure of the pass, the Russians have reverently laid in neatly-arranged graves—each bordered with a row of stones, and each having a makeshift for a headstone and footstone, while some of them bear transplanted wild-flowers, and over one grows a natural sprout of “everlasting,” common enough hereabouts—as many as eighteen of their comrades.

But after the Cossack camp spoken of, the westward slope of the great ravine, which as nearly as possible cuts the pass into two equal parts, was the scene of most slaughter. Fifteen horses lay here, mostly Russian, as could be told from their shoeing, which resembles that of England, while Turkish horses are shod with thin iron plates, having a small hole in the centre ; and there were at least nine dead bodies, but by the faint moonlight which was by this time prevalent, it was impossible to tell exactly.

Between twelve and one o'clock at night we reached the summit of the pass, from which, as I have described, the valley opens straight down, with an almost unbroken slope, to the Plain of Arishkerd, over which rises the white cone, or rather hummock, of Ararat. And at the top the pursuit, if I may use the phrase, was suspended, partly because our men were quite spent, and partly because at the bottom of the steep winding road by which the summit is quitted, there are, as we found out to our cost at the battle when Mohammed Pacha was killed, numerous small ravines, which would have been very likely taken advantage of by the Russians to place ambuscades. And there, up above the snow, our people had three hours' rest, of which no one was more glad than my poor horse.

The packing must have been very leisurely done, for there was hardly anything left about the camping places. Nor was there much dropped during the retreat. Near the top in the morning, our men had a great find, however. Sugar of any kind is not plenty in our midst, and we take our coffee without it, when once in a week perhaps we get the coffee! But to find twelve loaves of white sugar—"Russian sugar" all loaf sugar is called in this part of the world—was, indeed, a prize, and our fellows made *amusee* at every brook for hours later.

Perhaps even a greater piece of luck awaited them a little farther on. Tobacco has been growing very scarce in the ranks of late, and even the officers have had some difficulty in keeping themselves supplied with materials for the everlasting cigarette. What joy, then, to find two cases of real Moscow cigarettes ready-made, one of No. 3. quality, at 25 copecks (or 8*d.* English) per 25 pieces, and the other of a commoner kind, the price being ten cigarettes for three copecks (about a penny). Both were equally en-

joyed by the battalion which found them, and which was by no means niggardly in sharing them out to others, as I can personally testify. But this is very little spoil for a retreat covering during one day some twenty miles of ground.

Yesterday morning the Russian rear-guard was near the point at which the mouth of the pass opens out into the broad plain, and at half-past four we started after them, presently coming to the only abrupt piece of ground on the whole slope. On the eastern face of this the Russians had most kindly constructed, to protect their rear, a capital redoubt, flanked by rifle trenches. And here I may make one general remark. The Turks almost invariably make their rifle pits too high on a hill ; so that in point of fact the command of the whole slope is lost, and an enemy might advance, under cover of the shoulder of the slope, close up to the pits. On the other hand, the Russians nearly everywhere construct these defences too low down, leaving them exposed to shell fire. But these pits are an exception, for they are just at the right spot, and are as well made as any I ever saw even at Chatham.

This, then, was the rear of the Russians, and the very sight of the works should be a lesson to the Turks, who seldom have even a rear-guard, let alone redoubts and trenches. However, on this redoubt Reis Ahmed Pacha, Mustapha Pacha, Chahin Pacha, and their staff, with General of Division Schamyl, to offer, in season and out of season, his necessarily invaluable, if amateurish, advice, established themselves before five o'clock, and here they were destined to stop for over twelve hours. The Muscovs were not going to be hurried, so they took their stand by a swift stream which sends its waters into the eastern Euphrates, and the infantry of the rear-guard spread themselves about

the adjoining hills. Very, very slowly and cautiously did Ahmed Pacha push out first his right and then his left wing. It took all the morning to do it, and at noon things were as they had been, for the Russians did not move.

During the afternoon our lines assumed the shape of the letter V, the point being represented by two battalions with four guns on the pass, and by three guns and two battalions at the redoubt of which mention has been made as the lieutenant-general's station. Five battalions and two guns were on the hills to the left, and six battalions with four guns on the right. One of the latter, by skilful manœuvring, got within extreme range—nearly three miles—of a camp which the enemy had calmly pitched in and near a wretched Christian village, from which I write this. The gun, after two or three bad failures, contrived, by an extraordinary elevation, to get, about five o'clock, one shell into the camp. The effect was magical. One would have thought the shell had destroyed the whole of the tents, so quickly did the latter come to the ground after the bomb had burst, and certainly within ten minutes there was not a tent left standing.

Another of our guns on the right had been trying for a long time to get within range of a couple of heavy Russian pieces on the banks of the Murad's tributary, and at length by some strange piece of good luck managed to get a shell right between the guns. That was enough, and the smartest battery at Woolwich could not have limbered up a couple of guns and got away to the rear in less time than these Russian artillerymen when they once found that there was a chance of being hit. These, I am bound to add, were the only evidences of hurry that came under my notice on the side of the enemy during the whole retreat.

For the night the rear-guard of the Russians occupied

this village, and we our positions on the hills above it to the west ; and early this morning the enemy, having retired to the eastward, being now at Utch Kilissa, we moved down here, set up a formal camp, and despatched the main force to watch the movements of the enemy in case he attempts to retake Bayazid.

June 30.—I was really so thoroughly “done up” with the hard work, want of sleep, and privations of the last three days, that I took this village—this Christian village, Heaven help its miserable people!—very much for granted ; but to-day I have unmistakable evidence that the Russians were completely taken by surprise. Already has been recorded the clear and clean way in which they got out of the pass, and every credit has been given to them for it. But so secure did they deem themselves, with this plain in their rear and Bayazid then in their possession,—although they must have known of Faick Pacha’s operations from Van,—that they had accumulated here over 400 tons of fine red wheat, which they have used instead of barley for their horses, and they stored it in the earthen granaries of the village.

The poor Turkish horses have to get what food they can tethered by the foreleg to a picket-pin driven into the mountain side. So sudden was the departure, after all, that half of the pit granaries were left unemptied, while many tons of this splendid heavy grain were thrown into the river ; mine eyes have seen it scattered on the banks for miles to-day, as well as the place where it was pitched in ; and more of it was gathered together in an open space at the east end of the village. Here also were piled upwards of 1,000 sacks of fine white flour—for, you see, the Russians make war with much luxury,—and the whole lot was set on fire. But the Muscovs might learn something

in the art of destruction from some of the ingenious professors of arson who torment the English fire offices now and again. Wheat burns slowly, and flour much more slowly. Nearly all the wheat in the great pile was consumed—perhaps fifty bushels were saved,—but almost the whole of the flour was rescued, and besides about 100 sacksful spoiled by mixture with earth, some 800 sacks have been stored in the Armenian church here in the course of to-day.

A more welcome supply no army ever received, and the way the Turks have betaken themselves yesterday and to-day unto the baking of bread, would make one think there is only one object in life, and that is to mix flour and water, with or without salt, and slack bake it in slow earth ovens. It is all right, no doubt, and according to the laws of war, to destroy supplies in this way; but I must say I hope those who did it may live to know what it is to be, for once in a way, at least, in want of a day's bread.

I followed our army to-day for fifteen miles out and in; but there was nothing whatever to be seen, and as stirring events seem to be impending farther north, I proceed this evening to join the Mushir. In returning from Reis Ahmed's rear, I took a slight detour in order that I might see how wide was the track of devastation left by the armies. Wherever they have been flocks and herds are gone; there is not an egg, for there is not a fowl to be seen, and the people do not know when they get up where their very breakfast is to come from. Yet within twenty minutes' slow ride of the road over which these 30,000 or 40,000 men had passed, I found two villages absolutely unharmed; one of them was Christian and one Moslem. They were both alarmed at my unmartial appearance, and they would not sell either kid or fowl or eggs, but the Moslem villagers

readily gave me a drink of what we should call buttermilk, and would take nothing for it. And you should have seen the face of one very aged patriarch when, in reply to inquiries, he was told I was not a Tcherkess, but an Englishman. He raised his hands and eyes to heaven, and opened his toothless jaws; but whether he was giving thanks for the absence of a Circassian, or for having been permitted to live to see a Briton, is more than I can vouch for.

And so General Tergukasoff has got away almost scot free, and he deserved it, for his retreat was admirably managed. Those who fight and run away, may live to fight another day; and if some of the troops that disappeared yesterday over this plain do not live to see what Erzeroum is like, it will only be because Turkish troops are coming to the front very rapidly, and because both men and superior officers are rapidly gaining confidence in each other. As for the company officers, they are hopeless.

CHAPTER VII.

OLD CAMP AT SIVEN, *July 1.*—Right gladly would I have chosen a different route in going to rejoin Moukhtar Pacha, who has appointed Ismail Pacha, Governor-General of Erzeroum, to the command of the Alashguerd forces, which are following Tergukasoff to Bayazid, or whatever point of his own frontier he may decide to take. But there were difficulties in the way, and not the least of them was a possible difficulty from stray Cossacks on the plain or in the mountains to the north, and there was really no alternative but to proceed hither by the Tahirkeui Pass. And the first thing that was noteworthy in it was not that the host of rock-pigeons or the clouds of starlings were about, as they had been during the retreat, evening and morning, but how very few birds of prey were to be seen, and how those that were visible avoided the air-poisoning horses that still lay strewed about. Perhaps next in order was the fact that already the flocks and herds have found their way back to the mountain pastures, and were feeding to-day as quietly as though they had never been disturbed.

And now one had leisure to observe that the Russians had mended and improved the road through the pass in various ways, such as would never have occurred to a Turk, who would not even repair a conduit to irrigate his fields but that his very bread depends directly on it; and who, as we saw near Baiboort and thence to Erzeroum, prefers to have his artillery and his supplies break down on the way rather than make or mend roads fit to carry them.

At last they are bringing up a good supply of tents, four tents and poles, with pegs, being carried by each pack horse; but how they will be transported with an army on the march is quite another matter.

And lastly, in respect of military matters, I have to report that the news is perfectly true that the Koords, who had interred the Russian slain in accordance with superior orders, and, as it now seems, under some inspection, have exhumed them, stripped them of every single rag, and left them lying by the pit naked, and open to the good heaven above us, to the beasts of the field and the birds and flies of the air. I thought the other day that the world had nothing more hideous to show than the newly killed; but now, hours afterwards, I have a sickening shudder at the very thought of that straggling heap of red and green corpses. "An ounce of civet, good apothecary!"

I rode harder after that to get over here and tell the Mushir what I had seen, for one cannot suppose this treatment of the corpses of the invaders to be known to the Ottoman authorities, on whom it will inflict lasting disgrace if these bodies are not promptly re-interred, and that even with honour, and so secured that no Koord can get at them without a great deal more trouble than he will think it worth. But at Khorassan a general officer told me the Mushir was on the move to relieve Kars. In very truth he does not act on the Turkish motto, "Bakalum," nor does he, in familiar phrase, let the grass grow under his feet.

On my arrival here I found the camp in the possession of but one battalion, guarding stores, which had naturally accumulated on this spot, and the Mushir six hours in advance, on his way to the Soghanly Dag, with five-and-twenty thousand men. So I was not far wrong in my

return hither, where—and Siven in Turkish, appropriately enough, means “rejoice”—I find the tables indeed being turned, and Turkey on her way, if all accounts be true, to invade Russia and raise a rebellion in Georgia. If that be indeed done, desperation should nerve the arms of the Russians, for their retreat would be very effectually cut.

And before I start for the Mushir’s new head-quarters, let me touch briefly upon a little point which has been interesting myself during the last few days, and may interest some others. Of course, accepting the sacred narrative as it stands, that the Ark rested not on Mount Ararat, but “on the mountains of Ararat,” has it ever occurred to anybody to question whether what we call Ararat was known by that name to the author of the Pentateuch? Our Ararat—the Ararat by which Armenian tradition swears—is one of two pointed peaks, and it would be difficult to find on the Aghri Dagh, or Mount Masis, as Ararat is indifferently called, any space for the location of a large vessel such as the Ark was. We need not seek, on a careful reading of the sacred text, to deprive the locality of the honour of giving a resting-place to Noah and his company, and it would seem that the Aghri Dagh has been assigned as Ararat simply because it is the highest point in these parts. But in the Biblical story there is no trace of the resting-place of the Ark being the highest of the Tauro-Caucasian mountains; and there is one mountain not far from what we call Ararat, which looks to me as if it exactly fitted the narrative, and the narrative it. The name of this mountain I cannot find; but it is the loftiest part of the range called Ertish Dagh, or its neighbour range Ala Dagh or God’s Hill. It has twin peaks, and on one of these rises a huge rock—it must be a mile or more in length—nearly upright at the sides, and

perfectly flat at the top, so far as can be seen from below. Any place more likely for the Ark to rest in the course of Providence, as displayed in the story of Noah, I have never seen ; and I want to know if this is the true point, or if any one has the evidence that Mount Masis is the place on which the Ark stopped. Merely that it is the highest peak hereabouts seems of very slight weight, and the Ala peaks cannot be many hundred feet lower than the summit of the Aghri Dagh itself ; at any rate they are covered for several thousand feet with perpetual snow. Now that there is a controversy about everything mentioned in the sacred writings, let us by all means have a controversy about Ararat.*

IN SIGHT OF THE SOGHANLY DAGH, *July 2*.—I have no longer time at my disposal than will enable me to say that I have come up with our rear, and hope to reach the staff in the course of the day ; that the Siven camp is completely evacuated, and that the peasants say the Russians are still in the neighbourhood. I hope in our new-born activity we are not overshooting the mark ; but even if so, the relief of Kars is worth a little risk, and we hope to achieve that feat in a few days.

EN ROUTE TO KARS, *July 4*.—In crossing the Soghanly range yesterday, the Mushir went on a long way ahead, and had a reconnaissance on his own account, returning to the camp formed at Sarakamish late yesterday evening. The country through which the army passed from Siven is a remarkable contrast to the rest of the high lands of Eastern Armenia, and is as well wooded as any squire's park in England, though chiefly with Scotch firs. The roads are pretty good, too, thanks to the

* Since this was written Mr. James Bryce, D.C.L., has published an interesting dissertation on Ararat and his ascent of the mountain.

engineer corps of the Russians ; so that travel through the Sarakamish Pass is by no means as trying as elsewhere. From a hill just above our camp of yesterday and this morning, we can see Kars and the firing as plainly as though it were on the next range of hills. The Mushir keeps his own counsel ; but it is a moot point whether he intends to relieve Kars, or to try and cut the Russian communications with Alexandropol. In any case, the army—which is called one of 30,000 men, but which really consists of some 22,000—marched off this morning in a southeasterly direction, and cheering loudly, evidently under the impression that Kars is our objective. One reason for believing it is not, is that we have no more than barely sufficient for ourselves of either provisions or ammunition, although a camel train has returned to the rear this morning to bring up more of the latter.

Everybody hereabouts is falling now into the fatal error of despising the enemy. But a few weeks ago nobody had any hope of saving Armenia ; now it is a question of taking Tiflis at least, if not of going to Moscow ! All this is very foolish, but unhappily it is too true ; and sitting in the picturesque camp last night, dotted with a thousand fires among the fir trees, conversing with officers of all ranks, I found, save in the breasts of the Mushir and the chief of the staff, a feeling of sheer contempt for the Muscovs. There is no doubt that their recent proceedings have been marked by a strange lack of enterprise and tact, and even ordinary intelligence ; but all this may only be assumed to lead us on, and I, for one, fear a trap. Bounding and boundless exultation prevails among us, and what terrible fellows we should be, if we could only get at the kepis to-day—perhaps they may give us the chance to-morrow.

It is only right that I should make one more reference

to a very distressing subject. I lost no time, on reaching the camp, in resorting to head-quarters, for the purpose of telling the authorities about the horrible conduct of the Koords to the Russian dead. When I saw the Mushir last night, on his return, and told him all, he was as much pained and indignant as I expected him to be. He manifested a thorough soldier's feeling respecting the outrage, and at once gave orders for the despatch of an officer to see that the remains of the *malheureuses morts* are securely and honourably re-interred. I may add that the whole of the general officers on the ground were deeply grieved, both at the event itself, and at the scandal it is too likely to bring upon the Turkish name, which, however, ought not to be compromised by the misconduct of a few Koord peasants.*

I find that for once the Koords did a clever thing on Sunday. They intercepted and captured the Russian mail from Tergukasoff's division to Erivan, and we have had the satisfaction of perusing the letters in which the Russian officers, writing to their friends, give an account of their retreat from the Koseh Pass. On the whole, they do not stray far from the facts ; but they exaggerate, as I anticipated, both the numbers and the quality of the flanking force from Van, and they thoroughly show, as I also gathered from the circumstances, that they were entirely taken by surprise. It may relieve the minds of some anxious friends in Russia, if I add that all the private letters were burnt by the Mushir, and the official despatches alone preserved. Mdlle. Obrên, of Riga, may, however, be glad to learn that her Paul is unhurt, is better of his toothache, and is heart-

* I have told this story as I know it ; and I am not responsible for any comments laid before the English public under a recital of my name.

whole as yet, in spite of all the charms of Georgian, Circassian, and Turkish ladies. He begs her to wear the locket with his portrait, and he hopes she does not go out too much to parties. Jealous Paul! What hundreds of similar little secrets come out of a captured mail in war time! And now I must resume my trot after the army.

PLAIN OF KARS, OPPOSITE KARAHAMSA, *July 5.*—Moukhtar Pacha certainly has the knack of choosing strong positions, and on this occasion his judgment has not failed him. We are only ten miles from our last camp, and nothing save neglect could harm us here. The hill from which I write is the only spur on this south side of the plain that is defensible from all sides, even against far superior forces, and as we have five battalions and several guns upon three still higher hills in our rear, which are barely within the range of field artillery, but which have been very properly secured, it is not strange that the Mushir should propose to stay here until strong reinforcements, which are expected to-morrow, have arrived.

Meanwhile, the Russians have not a man or a gun between us and Kars. We could march in at any time, but that it is necessary for the moment to keep on the base line of the Soghanly range of mountains, by means of the passes in which we can move on shorter lines and in far quicker time than the enemy, to counteract any movement he can make on the Olti or any other road. All our pack horses and camels have been sent back for supplies; and if the inaction of to-day continues long, I shall be very much tempted to make a flying visit to Kars, from which we to-day have the news that a body of cavalry have captured fifteen arabas laden with cognac, rum, hollands, and champagne for the Russians besieging that city. Indeed, two of the officers representing the English army here

—Captains MacCalmont and Trotter,—were on the point of going in this evening with the intention of reporting upon the real state of affairs. The Mushir, however, must move as soon as he receives reinforcements and supplies, and as all the news of Kars comes here, there is no special reason for going there.

I hear indirectly (without quite believing) that the Russians have two complete new divisions at Akhaltsikh, and that one of them has already started for Ardahan. If this be indeed so, our game is up. However, the same authority has equally definite information that the Grand Duke Michael has retired to Tiflis in disgust, having first jumped three times in his rage upon his uniform cap, to express his annoyance at the turn things have been taking.

A thunderstorm last night, and another to-night. Under such circumstances camp life is less enjoyable than ever, and if it were not for amusing incidents that arise now and then, it would be dull indeed. Last night some Koord inhabitants of one of the numerous villages in this plain came up to complain to the Mushir of a theft committed by a fellow whom they hauled along with them. His excellency, for the moment free from his many anxious duties, consented to act as J.P. for the nonce, and, evidence having been given, adjudged the culprit to receive eighteen *coups de baton*, which one of the most stalwart aides-de-camp laid on, in the centre of an admiring circle, with such goodwill that the thieving Koord will hardly care to sit down for a week. Think of an English *A.D.C.* being made public whipper like this! And then the village community, every male of which had attended this solemn *al fresco* court of justice, saluted the Mushir in lowly fashion, and departed well satisfied with their toilsome journey and its result.

July 6.—The junior English military *attachés* started at noon to-day for Kars, and I had my horse brought up to go with them, as Baron Schluga de Rastefeld, of the *Neue Freie Presse*, and Mr. Bell, of the *Illustrated London News*, actually did. But a hint from head-quarters that we might move to-day, and would almost certainly move to-morrow, decided me to remain, the more so as the feeling grows upon me that we are walking with our eyes open into some trap.

It is inconceivable that the Russians should be allowing supplies without guards to reach us hourly, and men in small detachments to join us almost daily, if they did not wish us to believe that we might with impunity advance from our proper base. Of course it is possible that the Muscovs have been out-generalled all along the line, as they certainly were on the Bayazid road, and that they are really as seriously imperilled by a Georgian revolt as people here would like to believe. If the Russian inaction is a puzzle to me, there is not a soul in this camp to whom it is not also an insoluble problem. And thus in the dark we can only hope that the fatal blunder of over-confidence may not be committed, and trust to the well-proved prudence of the Mushir and his chief of the staff.

Early this afternoon five battalions with three guns came into camp—an earnest in earnest of the reinforcements on their way up from Erzeroum. These are the remnant of the troops that garrisoned Ardahan, and escaped when that fortress was carried six weeks ago. They are also the men whom I met straggling footsore to the rear when I first came to the front, and they looked all the better for their month's rest and the easy rate at which they have been marched to join the Mushir. The guns were as dirty as they possibly could be, but perfectly fit to go into action,

and better horsed than any I have seen in Turkey, save one battery in Stamboul, though their greys would be rather too conspicuous, for my taste, on the battlefield.

The battalions are very far from strong, very unequal, and as ragged and dirty as any of their comrades who have not been out of the field for two months. But there is plenty of go in them, and if they are short of officers (the companies averaged only one), it is well there are no more of them, if their quality is at all like that of the majority of their *confrères*. The first battalion had seven companies of sixty men, the second eight of sixty, the third eight of seventy, the fourth seven of fifty-four, and one of sixty, and the fifth seven of only thirty-six; but this battalion had furnished the men for the rear-guard and to escort the pack beasts which came in shortly afterwards.

The Mushir, with the bulk of head-quarters, went down the hill to receive the men, who marched past, not his excellency, but a guard of honour; and among those present to have a look at the Ardahan troops was the Mehemet Bey who distinguished himself so highly in one of the Ardahan forts as to be mentioned with honour even in the Russian despatches, and Chefket Pacha, a general of brigade, acting as general of division, who must not be confounded, from identity of name, with the general of division at whose door the Bulgarian atrocities were laid; for our Chefket is a brave soldier, and one of the best of good fellows.

A third thunderstorm approaching settled the question of our movement for the day; but that we shall move to-morrow may be regarded as certain, since two strong battalions have been sent on ahead to—wonderful to relate—construct a bridge with bullock-carts over the Kars river!

Our force actually here at this moment is 24,000 men, exclusive of nine battalions at Erzeroum, and on their way up, destined to arrive by Sunday probably, or Monday at the furthest. We have now twenty-six battalions of infantry, 5,000 cavalry of all sorts, twenty Krupp and nine mountain guns, and there are five complete batteries of Krupps in Kars, which will either be sent out to us or we shall go in and fetch them. In that event we should have quite as much artillery as we can well manage, and rather more than a fair proportion to the rest of our force.

It is to be hoped that if we do get these batteries out of Kars, we shall be able to spare at least one of them for Ismail Pacha's division on Alashguerd, which you will have seen to be very weak in this essential constituent of effective armies. By the way, we have no news from that quarter for three days, and I have just been told by one of the highest authorities in this camp, that I brought the last trustworthy intelligence. However, there is no doubt that Tergukasoff has got clean away, and Faick Pacha at Bayazid is blamed for inaction, since, if he had shown himself smart, he might have placed the Muscovs between two fires. But what was he to show himself smart with? It has yet to be proved that the poor man had any adequate force with which to attack the enemy, or even to hold his own.

Be it true or false, we have a story from the Ardahan district. It appears that the Turks had established a recruiting centre at Ardanutsch, in the commune of Livana, and had got together over 200 recruits, chiefly for cavalry. The Russians at Ardahan sent down a small column, caught the newly-fledged soldiers at drill, sent several shells and a good many bullets among them, and dispersed to the four winds of heaven the budding warriors,

who, when the Ottoman authorities wanted them again, could not be found. As this story is neither denied nor palliated at the *quartier-général*, it must, I suppose, be taken as at least approximately true, and it is the only evidence we have had of Russian activity for a week.

If, as the Mushir intends, we are able to leave this place to-morrow, and as I write nothing is more unlikely, for the rain continues to come down in torrents, and the lower grounds are a swamp, we shall probably reach Ardost, four hours from Kars, and a centre of an infamous sect of Mahometans who are known by the name of Kiselbasches, and are spoken of by other Mussulmans with horror, but it is impossible exactly to identify them, as in general respects they conform to the customs and worship of Islam. A report was sent to the Foreign Office on the subject by a late Consul at Erzeroum. Mr. Layard in his "Nineveh" has, if I remember rightly, some details concerning this subject.

CHAPTER VIII.

SEVEN MILES SOUTH OF KARS, *July* 8.—Yesterday morning the Mushir was afoot early, and had his army in column and his baggage train loaded up by seven o'clock. He then indulged his troops in a march which, as far as length goes, would nearly have taken them into Kars, but he preferred to pass it by and occupy a jutting mass of craggy hills to the east of Ardost, at a village called Vairan Kalé. You will find the hills, though probably without a name, on any good map. We are also about twenty miles from the Russian border, and due west of Mount Alaghez. The Kars river bounds our camp to the north-west, and a tiny stream on the east, while in front of us is a deep ravine. On the whole, then, we are reasonably safe if the Russians should attack us; but this they seem to have no intention of doing.

There was no incident of yesterday's march worthy of mention except that the fifth thunderstorm of the week drenched the poor privates, whose overcoats are as open as a sponge, and we were hardly settled in our position here when there came on another, followed to-day by yet three more. The weather has turned intensely cold, and we fairly long for the tropical sun once again.

In the course of the evening news came into camp that a Russian column, headed by a very strong body of cavalry, had moved towards their left flank, but they have not come within view of this position; and they are intended, we must suppose, more for the present protection of the siege

works than as a threat to us. But it will have to be more than a column that now saves those works from destruction.

The firing both of Melikoff's guns and of the big ones in Kars was very heavy yesterday, but it has been slack to-day; and this morning the Mushir, accompanied by the chief members of his staff, and by the English Commissioner, started for Kars, the former to consult with Hussein Hami Pacha, who has hitherto conducted the defence, the latter to see for himself how things are going on.

I rode over within two miles of the town, and was, in fact, close to the lines of the fortress, but duties here prevented me from entering. However, I have availed myself of a pair of eyes much better qualified than my own to judge of the actual position of affairs, and their report is most satisfactory.

Few persons in England, I fancy, have very much notion of the real size and extent of Kars, in spite of the imperishable English story connected with its name. But, in fact, although the population has dwindled—and it is so much the better for the existence of the place as a frontier fortress that it should have a small population—Kars is one of the first strongholds in the world. It and its out-works are sixteen miles in circuit; it nestles on the southern side of a mountain whose natural heights afford splendid sites for forts; and it can—strong by nature and for many a year strengthened, specially of late, by all the resources of military engineering—only be taken by a regular investment, if it be held by a sufficient force with any approach to pluck, in which its present governor is not supposed to be deficient.

Yet the Russians have hitherto contented themselves with bombarding the two forts called Mouklis Pacha and

Kara Dagħ at a range of 5,000 yards, or nearly three miles. Both these forts lie high, and you may readily guess how little effect a fire, though it be continuous for twenty days, has upon properly constructed works at such an elevation.

The total loss since the Russians first opened their trenches is, by the bombardment, 50 men killed ; but 350 lie wounded in the hospitals, most of them only slightly—though shell wounds need great care. There are also, healthy though the season has been, as many as 470 townsfolk and soldiers on the sick list ; but there has been no grumbling or want of co-operation on the part of either. The *moral* and the discipline of the military have been excellent ; and, if the Russians did not before know of the fact, the news of the approach of this army was conveyed to them by ringing cheers on the part of the partially beleaguered forces, who have thrown up outworks between the Mouklis Pacha and Kara Dagħ forts and the Russian batteries about half-way, replying to the latter with at least as great effect as is exercised upon the former, which themselves are by no means idle, and their height lends considerable weight to the missiles they direct against the Russian lines.

In fine, provisions are and have been abundant, and at no time have prices exceeded those of Erzeroum by more than from twenty-five to thirty per cent., while some things are actually cheaper. My gallant correspondent is good enough to add that, even if the tables are again turned in favour of the Russians, the prospect for Kars is *couleur de rose*, and that it can hold out well for a twelvemonth to come, even if it should receive no reinforcements and no fresh supplies. I do not know that it is necessary to add anything to these simple facts, unless it be that they are

amply corroborated from other sources, non-Turkish and trustworthy. I may say, however, that one of our medical staff, finding himself and his comrades out of tea, coffee, and sugar this morning, rode into Kars and bought them there, returning quietly and comfortably this evening. Pretty well this for a besieged city, methinks!

The command in Kars has this evening been taken over from Hussein Hami Pacha by a new mushir, who has suddenly appeared on the field—one of three Mustapha Pachas, whose nomenclature is a sad puzzle to everybody, and who would do well to differentiate themselves in some comprehensible way. I cannot but think that this is rather hard on the general of division, who has hitherto done fairly well, though he certainly has neglected the orders he received from Moukhtar. But the increase in the rank of the officers commanding has enabled Faizy Pacha, our chief of the staff, to go into Kars in the same capacity, and as his excellency is on the eve of his fiftieth year of soldiering—he was chief of the staff in Kars during the siege of 1854-55—it will be an agreeable change for him from the exposure of “the tented field” to the comparatively comfortable, but woefully flea-beset quarters, assigned to the staff in Kars.

The new Mushir takes over no fewer than three hundred and twenty guns, comprising four pfund, six pfund, nine centimetre, twelve centimetre, and fifteen centimetre breech-loading cannon, as well as a few muzzle-loading shunt guns of nine and twelve centimetres. Three guns, another friend informs me, have been disabled by the Russian fire—one shot ploughing through the carriage; and this informant puts the number killed by the bombardment at eighty-five instead of fifty; while he counts one hundred and fifty wounded. Of the artillery alone he says twenty have

been killed and forty-eight wounded. The wounded lying in the hospital he accounts for by the sorties that have taken place.

But it is impossible in Turkey to get at the truth of anything which is not seen with your own eyes. This very day we have had a most conspicuous example of the *suppressio veri*, upon a point which cannot fail to produce a sensation in England, more especially as the proof of the fact rests upon Turkish official despatches. One of these despatches should have reached us a fortnight ago, but it has been deliberately kept back until it has come by hand from Erzeroum.

It seems, according to the account of Faïck Pacha himself, that at the retaking of Bayazid a number of Cossacks, to the number of over five hundred—one report says one thousand five hundred—were surrounded, and on being summoned surrendered as prisoners of war. As such, though irregulars, they were treated by the lieutenant-general, who, probably on the principle of set a thief to catch a thief, ordered a body of Turkish irregulars to take care of these prisoners. And they did take care of them in a way which prevented some of the prisoners from escaping—in a word, before morning they murdered, as Moukhtar Pacha now admits, three hundred and seventy of them in cold blood.

This is what has been carefully kept back here at headquarters, where it was said but the other day that one or two regrettable irregularities had occurred at Bayazid, and that it would not be safe for English officers to go down there just at present on account of the depredations that were being committed by the Koords. It is but a short-sighted policy to try to hide these things; they must come out, and when they do their temporary suppression looks

unpleasantly like an attempt at extenuation. Of that I fully acquit everybody at these head-quarters. I am convinced the general staff share the horror and disgust that such proceedings must inspire in the breast of every civilised man; but to say nothing of natural feeling, it would be good policy to exploit them in language of regret, which there could then be no excuse for suspecting.

It is said this evening that on account of this affair the services of our irregular cavalry are to be dispensed with; but the news is much too good to be true, and for this reason—if it were not for the Koords and Tcherkesses we should be almost destitute of cavalry; and cavalry in a country like this means information. In fact, to send the Circassians and Koords to their homes would be voluntarily to dispense with the only means we possess of keeping ourselves at all acquainted with the Russian movements. Very often the information is absurdly wrong, but then it is frequently right, and at any rate it is nearly all we have.

The regular troops hate the Circassians and Koords, and are equally disliked by them, while the two irregular cavalry forces simply loathe one another. After the war I should not be surprised nor ill-pleased to find a system of mutual extermination in progress; and if the last trace of either race should be the cap of a Tcherkess stuck upon the spear of a Koord, a future Darwin or Owen might be puzzled, but the world in general and Turkey in particular would be all the better for the disappearance. They have done what they could in this brief campaign to bring sore discredit upon her name. I am glad to say Moukhtar Pacha has ordered the ringleaders in the Bayazid affair to be hung.

If the drill-sergeant can make an army, then ought

this to be the very finest army that ever camped. In "the evening and morning and at noon" the bugle is going, and the men are out of their tents hard at work on plain, or meadow, or hill. Such skirmishing and advancing and retiring and closing and opening was never seen before, for it lasts all day long; and one cannot help thinking that there may be just too much of a good thing. I am bound to say, however, that the drill is doing and has done good, and if it were accompanied by some kind of tent regulation it might help to turn the slatterns into smart soldiers.

But nobody in the camp appears to have the very slightest notion of putting the men—a great portion of whom, it must be remembered, are either raw recruits or persons who have long since passed into the reserve—through position drill. Aiming they are not taught at all, and this may account in some measure for the carelessness with which everybody treats cartridges, for they are dropped about in the most absurd way, and in a fashion that would drive an English commanding officer, bound to account for every round, out of his mind.

To-day, probably as a set off to the long march of yesterday, drill has been almost entirely pretermitted for a wonder; and in the intervals between the thunderstorms the men have found abundant leisure for that devoted attention to their skins which—and for the same reason—is characteristic of Turkish soldiers and Neapolitan lazaroni; then they have grouped themselves along the front, giving their eyes a good fill of Kars, and borrowing field glasses or telescopes from those field officers who happen to possess such *articles de luxe*, that they may look the more narrowly at yonder frowning hills and massy forts. The regimental officers take a far less intelligent interest in the fortress, and indeed in anything affecting the army,

than the majority of the men ; and when the war is over, and Faizy Pacha or Moukhtar Pacha is at liberty to commence a scheme of reorganization, he will do well, at whatever cost, to begin by making a clean sweep of the present company officers, who are hopelessly unfit for the positions they occupy—positions from which they never hope to rise, and in which, therefore, they have no motive for doing their duty, or the least trifle more than they are compelled to do. I am sorry to say that a great many of them are even worse than useless.

I have in my possession evidence of systematic plundering of the men. In the Kara-Hissar battalion, to take but one instance, is a soldier of the redif, or reserve, who by dint of five years' faithful service in Constantinople had accumulated, for him, the considerable savings of five Turkish lira, or £4 10s. His possession of this money became, somehow, known to his captain, who at once demanded it, and for a fortnight revelled in every luxury that the camp or the neighbourhood could supply, refusing to give the slightest written acknowledgment of having received the money. But in this case the soldier had acquaintances in the army who saw him righted, at least to the extent of extorting a receipt from the company commander. There are other cases, proved up to the hilt, which are even more grievous.

The men suffer a good deal also, as in the French army, from the tyranny of the non-commissioned officers ; but they do not seem in the least to kick against it, preferring to conciliate these masters of their destinies with whom it rests whether they are to have light or heavy work, and to whose position they may even hope some day to succeed.

KARS, *July 10.*—Prostrate with low fever and dysentery yesterday, but somewhat better at dawn to-day, and having

provided for any possible movement at Moukhtar's camp, I trotted over here, resolved to see the famous fortress for myself. And as soon as I reached head-quarters I found that during the night the Russians had evacuated their batteries, removed their siege train, and generally made themselves scarce, retiring to the northwards at a distance of a couple of hours.

Of course a visit to these batteries took precedence of everything else; and a ride of some four miles from the south side of the city brought me to the works so lately belching fire and iron hail, now silent and deserted as the grave. They lie just over the crest of a low ridge of hills, running at an acute angle from the north-east of the Kars position, and they are constructed on the latest plans known at Chatham, from which, indeed, the pattern seems to have been taken. The outline of the work is dug several feet below the surface of the ground. In the trenches thus made round or square timbers are planted, and over these a number of beams, round or square, as they come to hand. A sheet of common "bass" matting is then spread over the wooden roof, and upon this the earth is built, the epaulements and the traverses being supported by sandbags. In the traverses are chambers so constructed as to afford shelter to a whole gun detachment, so that when the look-out man called "Shot!" the dozen or so of men could take almost absolutely secure shelter below the actual level of the battery floor, and even of the surrounding soil.

At a distance of about twenty yards in front are the remains of advance screens with false embrasures, having the double advantage of deceiving the enemy as to the face of the works, and catching any fragments of shell that might burst close in front. The soil at this point is a firm, hard peat, which presents almost a coal-like cleavage, but which

when once broken up resolves itself into dust, and of course when struck by a shell, it flew in clouds. As the Russians admit the Turkish artillery practice at Kars to have been fairly good, it is almost unnecessary to say that the face of the works is a good deal broken up, and that still further by the tramping of the men engaged in removing the guns. Krupp shells were lying about this morning in every conceivable condition, some few unexploded, but mostly in fragments, the largest of which was always the base of the shell, and this seems invariably to remain whole, showing a certain amount of "blowing back"; in other words, a fragment amounting to one-sixth of the whole is usually wasted. Some shells had the plugs blown out, but were not exploded; others had the lead coating stripped; yet others were only cracked, without being destructively burst. These *débris*—the timbers of the works, sufficient to keep Kars in firewood for months—were all that the Russkis had left as prize to the Turks. I hear something of one hundred and fifty tents having been abandoned, but cannot verify the report.

It seems that the evacuation of the batteries has been going on for three days, and was suspected by those in the Turkish advance works, but that no steps were taken to harry the retreat. In the course of last night the Russians made a big fire, and at three o'clock this morning they removed their last guns. But it is characteristic of Ottoman information that the news was not actually known at headquarters until about eight o'clock, and not at Moukhtar Pacha's head-quarters until after eleven. In fact, some Turkish artillery officers have said to me, "What a pity we had not our cavalry out!" The truth is, however, that there is generally such a want of enterprise on this side that the stubbornness with which positions are contested is all the more worthy of credit. I am precluded from

giving any details about the position of affairs in Kars. It is by no means certain that the siege will not be renewed, and as the lines of defence will be maintained, such detail would be to give the enemy information which I shall not be the channel of communicating. Meanwhile, I may say that the defence of Kars, and the laying out of the new works, is a triumph for Woolwich. Hussein Bey, chief of the artillery at Kars, who has been responsible for the whole arrangements of the defence, and whom I hope before long to write Hussein Pacha, passed seven years at our great arsenal artillery centre; and although he left it as long ago as 1852, he acknowledges having learnt most of what he knows on the Common and in the Factories.

The discussion progresses on which side the greater brutality has been shown, and who began it. I remember that last year Lord Derby gave as one of his special reasons for endeavouring to localise the then existing war between Turkey and Servia, that it would be impossible to prevent the most horrible atrocities if powers like Russia and Turkey were at war. One of the chief officers of Kars said to me to-day, "What can you expect? Here is one power which has but a thin veneer, or rather French polish, upon its Tartar barbarism, engaged with another which hardly pretends to more than having entered upon the modern path of progress."

Between the irregular troops of such powers atrocities are in the nature of the case, and no generals can prevent them. The latest phase is—Who first fired on a flag of truce here? There is no doubt that a Russian doctor was killed under a flag of truce when coming to arrange about the wounded. His diary is in Mushir Moukhtar's possession, and I may have occasion subsequently to refer to it. The Mushir deplors the death and the firing, but says the act was done by the Koords, one

of whom was to be hung to-day at the camp at Vairan Kaleh for shooting a peasant who objected to the loot of a lamb. The Russians, on the other hand, aver that the firing came from an advance battery, where no Koords could be. The Turkish story is that the Russians left the Ottoman wounded after a sortie on the ground unattended for twenty-four hours, that then a captain and three men were sent out under the *drapeau blanc* to arrange, and that the whole detachment was killed. But there is no doubt that the regret felt at our *quartier-général* is either very sincere or very well assumed.

In spite of the explosions of a few officers, real respect is felt for English public opinion, and every facility is being given General Sir A. Kemball in sending Captains MacCallmont and Trotter on a mission to Bayazid to investigate, among other things, the whole of the recent melancholy business in that quarter. As some disposition may be felt in England to blame somebody here for not having had English officers on the spot as a precaution against such horrors, it may be well to state the simple fact that both the officers on duty with the column had been, on the eve of the Russian retreat, compelled *force majeure* to return to Erzeroum; and indeed I was the only Englishman in that part of the country at any period of the retreat, while even I had left before the date of the massacre.

Ismail Pacha, who succeeded a fortnight ago to the command of the right wing, is said to be moving with his column from Alashguerd on Erivan, by way of carrying the war into the enemy's country; and we are at this moment awaiting news from Ardahan, where the fortifications have been dismantled and the Turkish guns removed, as to the strength of the Russian forces in that quarter. If they are not more than is supposed, and we now learn that they have been much over-estimated throughout, we shall move upon

Gumri, better known as Alexandropol, and then the Russian chief of the staff, who has persistently despised those *moutons*, as he calls the Turks, may find reason to reconsider his somewhat hasty judgment of the capacity of the Ottoman forces. Indeed, no one can be for any number of days with this army without being deeply impressed with the heroism and the patriotism of the men. Some of the superior officers have not touched pay for forty-seven months, few of the men for twenty-five months. Yet they say, one and all, "Give us bread, give us powder, and give us shoeleather, and we will rid Asiatic Turkey, at least, of the invader." I have my own opinion of the capacity of some of the leaders.

I have not been sparing in my exposure of the incapacity of the battalion officers; but even the Russians confess admiration of the pluck, devotion, and endurance of the Ottoman troops. The diary referred to above speaks in the warmest terms of the way in which the Turkish forces behaved, both at the battle of Siven and that on the 21st, at the Tahir Pass. On the other hand, there is a good deal of evidence that the Russian rank and file have not been conspicuous for their courage in this campaign, though they have been kept very well in hand by their regimental officers, who are, the Turks themselves acknowledge, excellent. By the way, this dead doctor's diary is very outspoken as to the conduct of the campaign by the Russian chiefs; and its strictures, so far as we have the means of judging, appear in every instance to be well-founded, and not merely a reproduction of camp gossip, which, as we know, generally assumes the form of depreciation.

And here I cannot but repeat a warning I have already offered concerning telegrams concocted at Erzeroum by persons who seldom or never go near the front, and who, bound to supply a daily ration of sensation, alternate

bazaar rumours with a hash-up of Turkish official telegrams. We have had a good laugh to-day over a file of English papers containing these exploits of reckless historians and amateur strategists. Some of the blunders are ridiculous in the extreme, especially those perpetrated a month ago, while the Russian scare was agitating the Armenian capital, and the Muscovs were expected every morning to be thundering at the new gates.

Nothing is harder than a correspondent's life in the field; nothing is easier than to sit in a big town and send a telegram every morning, if only a man can condescend to employment of that kind. But the value of Erzeroum despatches may be guessed when I tell you that we have only weekly communication with that place, and that the nearest telegraph office is sixty miles from us; that it only takes despatches in Turkish, and those merely when the wire is not needed for actual military work.

I certainly can get no independent telegram to Constantinople or England under three or four days, and at least one other correspondent is in precisely the same position. Nor are messengers always, or even generally, to be found, and when they are found they cannot be sure of covering the ground in the fixed time; while a telegram destined for the west reaching Erzeroum after ten a.m. is shelved for twenty-four hours. Even the best telegrams hence cannot tell all the truth. How much there is left when it is filtered through the channels I have indicated, you may readily perceive by taking a file of some journals and comparing telegrams with facts as ascertained by trustworthy correspondents.

CAMP AT VAIRAN KALEH, *July 11.*—Nothing to report to-day but a cavalry reconnaissance to the north of Kars, and a thunderstorm which has drenched everything and made it impossible to write.

CHAPTER IX.

KARS, *July* 13.—A prisoner perforce in Kars, held here in durance by the new-born activity of the Cossacks, who are scouring the country to-day, and not allowed to peril myself by the, perhaps, too great anxiety for my welfare of Faizy Pacha, chief of the staff, and Hussein Bey, commanding the artillery, both of whom flatly refused me permission to go without an escort, which could not for the moment be spared, I have to-day had a good look round, and the result will probably afford more interesting matter for a letter, than if I had succeeded in getting out into the tented field to see a *corps d'armée* on the march once more through a known country.

But to continue the narrative of the campaign it is necessary that I should say the Mushir suddenly moved yesterday morning. At nine o'clock overnight I asked the question most distinctly of one of the principal members of his excellency's staff, and was told that he had no present intention of changing his quarters. Yet, at half-past three in the early—almost in the purple—dawn, the bugles were going, and by seven there was hardly a vestige of the camp; even the bullock trains were gone, and so unexpectedly had the whole thing been done, that about 2,000 boxes of rifle ammunition had to be sent on, though destined for Vairan Kaleh.

Requiring what the French very aptly call *vivres*, and having a very lively recollection of nine thorough soakings

in four days in the camp, I permitted myself the luxury of a visit to the ramshackle bazaar in Kars, and a night under a roof that would not let in the rain.

The Mushir advanced yesterday to a position about eight miles to the south-east of Kars, at a village known as Porluke, and of so little importance that it, so far as I can trace it, is only marked on the Russian map. The position here was not a strong one, though well up in the mountains, within about ten miles of the nose which Russia pokes into Turkish territory.

This morning an advance was made in a north-east direction, almost parallel with the road from Kars to Alexandropol or Gumri, and with the Russian frontier line for about eight miles beyond Porluke, among the mountains; and next week there will be yet a further and very important move. No wonder that, with this unpleasant proximity to the frontier, the Russian irregular troops should have begun to show great activity, especially when they had such a provocation as they received this morning on awaking, to find that the Koords had during the night stolen 200 horses, and rather more than 600 sheep, out of their camp, under their very noses, and brought them safely into Kars, where they have during the siege been quite accustomed to plunder of this kind from the Russian depôts. "That is the way," said Hussein Bey, with whom I was sitting when the news and the first specimens came in, "that the Turkish army is fed and partly horsed." And really I must say that everybody but myself took the whole affair as very much a matter of course.

At the Mushir's present rate of progress he should, even if he does not cross towards Alexandropol, soon come into collision with the Russian troops at Kurukdara, and that ought to bring about a general engagement, though

probably Moukhtar Pacha will prefer being attacked to attacking.

However, this morning early a sufficient number of Cossacks made their appearance between this and Moukhtar's camp to cause the firing of our alarm guns, and to ensure their speedy dispersion by our irregulars. But they were dispersed, not driven back, and it was this that made the journey this morning too dangerous to be undertaken without absolute necessity.

In default of returning to the camp I spent some time in obtaining from the artillery commandant a few particulars of the late siege. The colonel was good enough to refer to his official memoranda for every item that he gave me, and all may, therefore, be regarded as perfectly accurate. The Russians first appeared in sight of this fortress on April 28, and after a couple of days spent in reconnoitring settled down to their work of constructing a battery on May 1. By the evening of the 4th of May, the guns from this battery had become annoying, although it was at a distance of about 12,000 yards; and on the 5th of May the garrison, by a well-planned sortie, got rid of their assailants by destroying the work, which was situated on the south side of the river.

The next approach of the enemy was on the north-east side, and although they were obliged to commence at almost as great a distance as before, they had, by the 17th of June, completed their works up to about 5,000 yards, and that was the farthest point reached by them. For, as I have before said, wherever the batteries were dangerous, the Turks met them with counterworks.

From the 17th June till the 9th July inclusive, each day brought upon the city a heavy rain of projectiles, about two-thirds of them being directed against the forts and

works, and the rest sent at random over the whole position.

It may be a great satisfaction to one of these random gunners to learn that one of his latest shots—the cannon sending which must have had at least thirty-four degrees of elevation—passing over Mukhlis fort, killed a young mother and two children, playing innocently at the door of their humble mud-roofed home.

A record, of reasonable accuracy, but under the circumstances liable to error, shows that during the twenty-three—or twenty-two and a half—days of the bombardment, over 40,000 projectiles were thrown into the city from the great 16½-centimetre or 6½-inch guns, and the great 9-pfund field gun—our 40-pounders and from small Krupps, the latter pitched, it would seem, more out of the desire to be firing than with the hope of doing any damage. Except to one of the forts, which is of somewhat weaker profile than its neighbours, next to no damage was done to any of the works, though their vicinity is frequently ploughed up in the most terrible manner.

I have already given the loss by the actual bombardment, and I am now in a position to say that, including the loss of the fifteen great and little sorties that were made during the twenty-three days, the actual damage to life and limb was 120 killed and 280 wounded. The Russian loss, it is believed, is at least double this, exclusive of the sorties, from which they suffered very heavily. Of the 350 Turkish guns, including in that term mortars and howitzers, the largest were the 13-inch mortars and the 15-centimetre guns; while of the five batteries of field guns the largest was 9-centimetres. On the other hand, while the Russians brought to bear only twenty-two siege guns, they all appear to have been of the 16½-centimetre, or 6½-inch, calibre, and

the field guns, supplementing their greater brethren properly belonging to the batteries, were chiefly sixteen-pound weapons. To the Russian 40,000 shot, shells, and bombs—only one in a hundred of which, it will be seen, did any harm to the garrison or inhabitants, for the returns of killed and wounded include both—the Turks replied with 17,458 large projectiles, ranging from 13-inch bombs to 12-pounder shells, the latter, of course, used chiefly in the sorties, though occasionally good practice could be made, owing to the elevation of the forts over the enemy's works, with pieces of smaller calibre. How the Russian siege guns must have suffered from the excessive elevation at which they were fired will be clear to any artilleryman, and we know that the Turkish fire had to be slackened at several points, on account of the too great elevation of the pieces, notwithstanding the advantage of the ground in nearly every instance.

I do not know that any particular lesson can be drawn from the performances of the guns of either side in the recent siege, except it be that the engineers will have the best of it so long as the artillerymen play at long bowls. Well-constructed works like these on every side of me—and few men in this generation have seen better—cannot be destroyed by hammering at them with whatever number of guns, except at very short and very dangerous ranges. But engineers, who persist in weak profiles in these days of heavy charges, prismatic powder, great velocity, and monster shot, must expect to have their forts and batteries tumble about their ears in such a way as almost to prevent the possibility of repair by night working parties. More I must not say; for, as has been before remarked, the siege may be renewed.

Only on one point further may I touch. The Turks are

very anxious to know what particular powder the enemy was using, as although they themselves were employing a prismatic explosive made at Constantinople, and apparently yielding the best results, the time of flight of the Russian shells was singularly small, being sometimes little more than half that of our projectiles.

The subject is one that has little interest for the general reader, but soldiers may well open their eyes when they are told of some of the observed times of flight from the Russian batteries ; and there is a similar singularity in the recorded times of the speed of the sound, which would lead one to imagine that the Turkish observers were inaccurate, if it were not that the figures differ materially from those ascertained among ourselves only in the case of guns of the larger calibres, and all the Ottoman artillery officers are at one on the subject, after a number of perfectly independent observations.

From the artillery head-quarters' tent to the chief hospital is only a step, and not a very unnatural one ; and there is enough about this building to render it worthy of some description. But first in order of time comes to-day the examination of a spy caught yesterday morning in the garb of a Turkish peasant, and actually having in his possession the Russian order to the outposts to pass him as a regular *espion*. This wretch really was a native of a frontier village, whose name I did not catch, and he was therefore perfectly familiar with the Armeno-Turkish language. He attempted to account for the possession of the paper by saying it was given to him by a Russian general as a safe-conduct, and he did not know its contents. But as he had tried to tear the paper into pieces on his arrest, this excuse failed him, and as soon as he found this his tone changed, especially when he was told that he would

not be hung but flung from a rock. All bound hand and foot as he was, with a couple of soldiers having loaded rifles standing over him, ready to shoot him at a moment's notice—you will see the scene in the *Illustrated News*—he positively seemed to assume a heroic attitude, as he volunteered to tell all he knew. And certainly he made a very clean breast of his crime, and told us what information he had actually sent; how he was commissioned to find out the number of men in Kars, and the extent of the damage done by the bombardment; and afterwards to find the men and guns at the disposal of Moukhtar Pacha in his camp. He also gave what is believed to be a correct statement, so far as he could, of the Russian army; and I believed his life was to be spared, when just now I heard that he was dead and buried.

The hospital proper of Kars is in the centre of the town, but it is now devoted to ordinary sick cases and to those in which the wounds are slight. The garrison hospital is situated near the camp, which is on the plain to the south of the town and the river. When the war broke out one of the few public buildings on which money was being spent in Turkey was a new cavalry barrack, constructed very substantially of the dark volcanic stone of the vicinity; and this being about half finished, was promptly seized upon by Yussuf Bey, the chief medical officer of the fourth *corps d'armée*, as affording him the necessary cover for his probable patients. But as he had promptly to take the field, the organization of the hospital and care of the wounded fell to Teyfik Effendi, a young surgeon of the Imperial School of Medicine at Stamboul, to whom the entire credit of the excellent arrangements must be accorded.

At present more than half of the four hundred beds are unoccupied, and even the cases now in Dr. Teyfik's

charge are generally convalescent. But there are a few which illustrate at once the terrible nature of the injuries sustained during the siege, and the progress of surgical knowledge even in Asiatic Turkey. Thus, one poor fellow, whose right hand was blown off by a shell, received also from the same missile five deep flesh wounds in the shoulders and seven on the head, five of these being fractures of the skull. The case seemed hopeless, so great was the prostration of the patient ; but, although the injuries are only three weeks old, the man is out of danger, and talked quite rationally to-day. In the next bed lies a man whose skull was blown open, the brain being exposed in two places. When brought in, he was, of course, insensible ; but on being operated upon at once, recovered, and has since retained complete consciousness.

A private in the regular cavary during one of the sorties, received six sword wounds on the head, every one cutting into the bony structure, but not one reaching the brain. This was also three weeks ago, and to-day he was walking about the ward helping the assistants in attending to the other patients. One of the worst cases was that of a man self-wounded by trying to unscrew from curiosity the fuze plug of a shell, which burst. The face was wholly disfigured by the fragments and by two pieces of stone, the lips being divided in four places ; and yet, by the prompt use of sutures the wounds were so well treated that in a few days the man will be discharged hardly scarred. A comminuted fracture of the arm and shoulder from a shell hardly left an inch of bone together, but the man is doing well.

Many cases of contusions, where the shells had not actually penetrated, were very serious. In one of the worst, where the bottom of the dorsal region was and is in a fear-

ful state, gangrene was on the point of setting in, but Dr. Teyfik ventured on a long incision yesterday, when the last moment seemed to have come, and the man was quite easy to-day, and doing well. Only one of the Russian shells burst in a battery magazine, but I saw to-day many evidences of the fearful character of the wounds that the explosion of the store powder inflicted. Yet every single case has been saved ; and in the worst, though the man will be weeks before his face will be uncovered save for dressing, he is cheery, and expresses himself as sure to get well. The last case I need name was one in which, by a shell explosion, the skull was driven in on the brain, and was actually in seven pieces. This case is not ten days old, but to-day the man was sentient, and there is little doubt but he will live.

The beds are of common wood, closed at the sides and ends, with perhaps too heavy bedclothes, and rather closer together than we should quite approve in London, but under the circumstances this was unavoidable; and the ventilation in every one of the sixteen wards—which include an ophthalmic ward, but are exclusive of one for the reception of new patients, which we might call the operating ward—is beyond reproach. At the head of every bed hangs a sheet of paper giving a history of the case, the treatment and the dietary ; and on the whole it may be doubted whether there is a single surgeon in London or Paris who would find anything seriously amiss in this temporary hospital, which is a credit to the medical service of the Turkish army.

None of the foreign, chiefly German, doctors who have been engaged for the duration of the war, and who have assigned to even the youngest of them the status of a field officer and pay and allowances exceeding those of a

colonel, have had anything to do with this Kars hospital ; and it is almost incredible, but it is true, that the native medical officers who have done so much here should be from two to three steps, in both pay and rank below their foreign colleagues.

CAMP NINE MILES S.E. FROM KARS, TWELVE FROM THE RUSSIAN FRONTIER, *July 14*.—We had a little fight to-day at noontide hardly worth describing. Faizy Pacha and Hussein Bey were quite right yesterday in declining to allow individuals to leave Kars for the camp, as sporadic parties of the Cossacks were about all night, though to-day, early in the morning, they had all disappeared ; but just before noon three regiments of Russian dragoons and eight of regular Cossacks, with a light cavalry battery, appeared on our right front making a strong reconnaissance. The camp was very soon on the alert, and the enemy took care not to approach closely to this remarkably strong position ; but they sent us four shells as tokens of their goodwill, and we replied with a dozen. Ours, like theirs, however, fell about a mile short. The fact is, that the troops were some four miles from each other, and in less than an hour—indeed much less—the Muscovs began to draw off. I should estimate the strength of the enemy at five thousand men ; there may have been six at the outside.

But they would have had every chance of being cut off by the Kars garrison if Melikoff had not made a demonstration to the east of the city. He brought four batteries into position on the hills at the back of his old works, and showed eight battalions on his left and seven more on his right covering his front with Cossacks. The infantry were moved about in a rather aimless way, and the Mushir Mustapha and Faizy Pacha opposed to them some 13,000

men, chiefly under cover of the forts, but a few of them in the open to the eastward. The Russians fired perhaps a dozen shots, and then fell back to their old camp on the north-east, from which they withdrew a little later, as the column of cavalry from Moukhtar's neighbourhood got safely back; but they did not at all allow themselves to be seduced by a retirement of the infantry of the garrison within fair reach of the heavy artillery of the city. Still they must have lost a few men from shell fire, and on our side there was one man killed and six or seven wounded, including an old colonel who had been through the siege of Kars twenty-three years ago, and had subsequently served in the Arabian campaign without receiving so much as a single scratch.

It remains to be seen whether the reconnaissance will have encouraged the Muscovs to come and attack us. I fancy not; for their peep must have shown them that we hold two lines of hills, connected by a fine flat ridge, well within range of the guns on the hills, in addition to which we have a couple of batteries on the centre. Besides, both mushirs are to-day in the field, for Mustapha Pacha, with Faizy Pacha as chief of his staff, and twenty-eight battalions, in company of three batteries, remain out of Kars, and hold a position to the south-east of the city, where they can put themselves in immediate communication with us or act on either flank of the fortress, which is left to the care of Hussein Hami Pacha and Hussein Bey. Still, very few days can pass before one or other of these divisions comes into collision with the Muscovs, and that must bring about a general engagement. But Moukhtar does not wish to precipitate the action until the additional troops, now on their way from Erzeroum, have arrived.

I do not mind confessing that, having watched Ahmed

Moukhtar Pacha very closely for the last two months, I am bound to declare that, altogether apart from any question of his, it may be temporary, success, I have seen him in all sorts of circumstances a man of prompt action, of ready resource, of great powers of observation, of greater powers of organization. It is to him that Turkey owes the fact that she has now in the field in Asia one hundred and one battalions instead of the twenty-nine he left in Kars, and the nine with which he quitted it to meet the Russians in the field. I have to-day received, partly from his principal aide-de-camp and partly from himself, the information as to the composition and distribution of his forces this 15th of July, which I append. Even the order of battle has been confidentially communicated, to me, but that of course I do not feel at liberty to give.

To take at once the corps under the Mushir's direct orders, and now in this camp, we have here in three divisions, under the Generals of Divisions Raschid Pacha, Chefket Pacha (acting as *ferik* or general of division), and an officer not yet named, thirty-five battalions of infantry, averaging 560 men, besides five on the way from Erzeroum; six batteries of field artillery, besides three mountain batteries; and 6,000 cavalry under the command of Ali Pacha.

The Kars corps under Mushir Mustapha, who, though much older, ranks junior to Ahmed Moukhtar, and is under his excellency's orders, consists—in two divisions, commanded by Hussein Hami and Ali (*secundus*) Pachas—of the original twenty-nine battalions of infantry, five batteries of field artillery (of which three are in the field, and for the other two the horses are on their way from Erzeroum), and 1,000 cavalry all told.

Ismail Pacha, who is only fourteen hours from here, and who has been joined to-day by Captains Trotter and Mac-

Calmont, has seventeen battalions under Reis Ahmed Pacha and Chahin Pacha, three batteries, and 3,000 horse ; but beyond occupying a Russian force still under Terguka-soff, I do not think a great deal will be required from Ismail at present, and that he will be kept pretty much on the defensive.

Faick Pacha, at Bayazid, has six battalions, three batteries, and a few cavalry. The Erzeroum garrison now comprises fourteen battalions of infantry and over 200 siege guns—as I am told.

Thus, under Moukhtar Pacha's orders are one hundred and one battalions, numbering about 60,000 bayonets, 10,000 cavalry of one sort or another, and seventeen batteries of field artillery, with over 300 siege pieces. And I think he may be trusted, as he has done so very much with so little, to dispose now of the Russian force, which is estimated here at 12,000 cavalry and sixty battalions of infantry, with an unknown number of batteries, and about forty guns of position.

But the mere assemblage of such a force is a proof that Moukhtar is the right man in the right place, and I believe he will know how to use his army at once prudently and boldly. Perhaps his excellency's strongest characteristic is an indomitable self-confidence. He believes in his star, and is convinced he will always fall on his feet. There are few qualities which more become the commander of a great army in the field, and it is perhaps the very quality which has brought him here within sight not merely of majestic Ararat, but of the Russian fortress of Gumri.

I think history will acknowledge in Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha one of the most remarkable men of his time ; and I must say that he has won upon me greatly, not merely by his success, but by his excellent personal qualities.

July 16.—This morning every search for the Russians in the neighbourhood of Kars was fruitless, and Faizy Pacha sent the Mushir a message by me that they had entirely disappeared. But the commander-in-chief knew exactly where they were and what they were doing, and was able to inform the envoy of the chief of the staff at Kars that the head-quarters of the enemy were still at Yenikeui, and that they had not quite disappeared in the direction of Gumri, as his Excellency Faizy had been disposed to think.

The Kars division moved this morning about three miles to the northward, and encamped behind some quickly made entrenchments, on the hills behind the site of the old Russian camp in the valley at the back of their late batteries, where the Turks are supported on the rear and the right by the forts and batteries of the fortress. The Mushir has pushed forward also five battalions on a spur about three miles in front of his camp; so that if the Muscovs repeat their vain attempt of *avant hier*, they will meet with a warmer reception than they had before.

The only other event of even the slightest interest is the appearance in camp of one solitary Scottish volunteer—a youth who hails from the great city on the Clyde, and who has had an education chiefly on the Continent. He had a companion who lies sick at Erzeroum, and the Scot has journeyed to Kars in the company of some Tcherkesses, whose by no means valiant body the Mushir, on my introduction, gave him liberty to join. I say on my introduction, for as regards all constituted British authorities the youth is, of course, *hors de la loi*, and the Mushir was pleased to attend at once to the request I made on behalf of Faizy Pacha. I hope the Scot may not rue joining such a lawless crew.

CHAPTER X.

THREE MILES FROM THE RUINS OF ANI, *July 18.*—Yesterday morning, virtually a new series of movements were initiated by Mushir Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha—movements destined, if I do not greatly mistake, to settle the questions whether Turkey is to be broken up piecemeal, whether the Russian power is not a mere bubble, and even whether Turkey cannot retake from the Muscovite by the strong hand, those Asian provinces in which the Czar has been the sovereign lord since the treaty of 1829.

That this is on the cards is certain ; that it is possible, is firmly believed here ; that it is probable, I shall not, after the surprises of the last two months, attempt to deny. Turkey can hope for no conquests in Europe—it is even possible that she may lose all control over the provinces north and west of the Balkans ; but what if she were able, unaided, to repossess herself of Georgia, and to win Circassia even, across that vast chain of the Caucasus, part of which is before my eyes as I write, which is the nursing mother of nearly all the nations of the West, and which has been described somewhere or other as the natural northern frontier of Islam ?

No sooner had I despatched my letter, dated the 16th inst., early yesterday morning, than I learnt from a sure source, that the Mushir contemplated a strong cavalry reconnaissance up to the Russian outposts. As you are already aware, the enemy had changed their position from the north-east of Kars to the south-east ; in point of fact,

they had begun to fear for their own frontier, and, consequently, they placed themselves in alignment with that frontier in two camps,—that on the right resting to the south of the main road leading from Kars to Gumri, or Alexandropol, and their left covering another and more southern road to that frontier fortress.

Baron Schluga, of the *Neue Frei Presse*, was invited by the Mushir to accompany this expedition, and his excellency was kind enough to allow me a like privilege, which, in these days of concocting descriptions of battles at Erzeroum, it may be just as well to state no other journalist enjoyed.

The Mushir's instructions for the reconnaissance were taken by Chefket Bey and Sadyk Bey, two colonels on the staff of the First Division, and the word was given to start from head-quarters soon after nine a.m. But the cavalry camp was a good half-hour's hard galloping from the *quartier général*; and what with one thing and another, it was close upon two hours before we were fairly in motion, although a force of some 400 Circassians was sent on in advance about ten o'clock. I have no reason personally to complain of the delay, for the interval was passed in pleasant and instructive conversation, over coffee and cigarettes, in the marquee of Ali Pacha, commanding the cavalry division of this army.

His excellency, the veteran chief of the cavalry, who must be close upon seventy years of age, and who yet rides his charger like a lad of eighteen, did not conduct the reconnaissance in person, but detached for that purpose the 1st Cavalry Brigade, under the command of Mustapha Safvet Pacha, the *beau idéal* of a light cavalry leader, one of the most amiable, accomplished, and intellectual officers in the Ottoman service. This was not the first time his

excellency and I have been together against the Russki, for he commanded a brigade during the retreat of Tergukasoff through the pass of Tahirkeui; and he was now pleased to invite me to remain by his side throughout the day, an invitation which you may be sure I was not slow to accept.

The bugle calls "boot and saddle" and the "assembly" brought together near Ali Pacha's tent one of the strangest cavalry columns that even this war has seen. At its head was a squadron of Circassians, in their long (chiefly drab) coats, and on horses wiry, small, and lasting, but that would fetch little by their appearance at an English fair. The equipment of the horses themselves was as varied as the tastes and means of the men would permit, and knew no other regulation.

There are Tcherkesses and Tcherkesses, and these were not the fellows who prowl about the rear of the Turkish armies, though I must say that the nuisance has been put down very considerably since the attention of the Mushir was called to the subject, and since Reschid Bey has been placed in formal command of this remarkable body of men, exiled from the country against which they are now fighting with all the inspiration of a desire for revenge and religious animosity. They carried a "holy flag" of green, bearing in silver letters an inscription from the Koran, and a smaller rallying standard, bearing the Turkish emblems, the star and the crescent.

Next them, were four weak squadrons of regular cavalry, mounted on larger, though one can hardly say better, horses than the Tcherkesses, and sporting blue jackets embroidered with red braid, and weather-worn to every shade; for some of the men have not had new uniforms for five years, and the dye of the cloth was bad at the

beginning. The appearance of these light dragoons, therefore, is of the most variegated kind, as their jackets vary from deep blue to greenish grey.

Third in the column were three squadrons of Tcherkesses, carrying a red standard, with the Koran's exhortation to war against the infidel; and fourth were three—I suppose I must use the word—squadrons of Koord horsemen, some in red, some in blue, with equipments at times of solid silver, at others of ragged rope; but all carrying spears, and all having flint-lock pistols, while the rest of the cavalry are armed with the old pattern Winchester repeating rifles, throwing a bullet not much larger than that of an army revolver, and being most objectionably flattened at the point.

The column was subsequently joined by a couple of squads of the Bashi-Bazouks of Sivas, who have been equipped in a sort of uniform of red printed calico, by the patriotism of a gentleman of that district, and who are among the most trustworthy cavalry we have. One of the Tcherkess squadrons is called of Leshgie, and five hundred more of the same denomination are expected to join the army under Mehemet Bey in a day or two, being, if rumour can be depended on, the picked men of the whole race. The dragoons sent forward one squadron as an advance guard, and these, so to speak, “hunted in couples.” The left flank was protected by Reschid Bey and two Tcherkess squadrons, and our route lay all day over a rough, rugged, rocky country, from 6,000 to 8,000 feet above the sea level, and intersected by grim ravines, the channels in winter time of furious torrents, but now as dry as Mr. Anybody-you-like’s speeches or sermons.

The loveliest lichens of every hue grow on the grey stones, and between, around, or over these masses of rup-

tured basalt, grow a thousand wild-flowers, rendering up under the feet of our horses often oppressive perfume, and herbage so rank that it hides treacherous, slippery stones, lying on ground dangerously honeycombed with myriads of molehills.

Our destination was a broad valley—so broad that it may be almost termed a plain—lying between Kars and Mount Alaghez, and having in its wide bosom the Arpa river, and therefore the existing boundary between Turkey and Russia; having, moreover, on its northern side, two Russian camps. The plain is dotted here and there with hills, each of which answers to Murray's singularly lucid description of the rock of Van, since it "rises in the middle, falling at both ends." In comparison with the ranges of mountains on every side, these hills are but pigmies; yet, isolated as they are, they form considerable features in the landscape; and, what is more to the purpose, in the military topography of the terrain, which is further intersected at every conceivable angle by deep, though not wide, ravines.

On the southern side the mountains descend to the plain by terrace-like slopes, while on the north there is a gentle acclivity, ultimately attaining the snow level. And, by the way, as I write this, I am banquetting on iced tea, the cooling element of which has been brought from the Russian mountains by some enterprising Koords as a present to the Mushir.

A ride of an hour, brought us in sight of this plain, and of the Russian camps on the further side of it; but now we had to be nearly quiescent for a couple of hours, as we examined the enemy's position through our glasses, and while our irregulars swept our side of the plain, and a bit of the other, in search of stray or other Cossacks.

They found one—a Mussulman Cossack, who had been the bearer of a despatch from one of the Russian camps to the other, and whom they caught on his return, after an exchange of shots, in which the estafette was wounded in the right breast.

That the Koords stripped him to his shirt, need hardly be said, and in that condition he was brought before his Excellency our leader, whom he piteously implored not to cut off his head—treatment which he doubtlessly believed to be the logical sequel of that he had already undergone at the hands of the Koords, or which he, perhaps, thought he deserved for fighting against those of his own race and faith. At any rate, he seemed very thankful when he was sent safe to the rear in charge of a sergeant of regular cavalry, and at the camp he gave some particulars of the Russian force, which are believed to be accurate. He will be interned at Kars, and there receive the allowances and rations which are accorded to other prisoners, who are far better treated than our own soldiers in the matter of provisions and money.

We had orders not to shirk a fight if a fair chance of one presented itself, for Mustapha Safvet Pacha had asked permission to that effect, recognising the fact that his men were “getting blue-moulded for want of a beating.” But though some of our fellows actually went close to the Russian camps, the enemy was not to be drawn; and if the very truth must be told, the only Russian I saw all day was the solitary prisoner aforementioned. But we examined their camps from every point of view at our leisure; we roughly pic-nicked on biscuit and water; we had a magnificent fight between my stallion and that of Baron Schluga, in which both horses used their feet as skilled members of the P. R. their hands; and having thoroughly

searched a line of country extending over twenty miles, we thought it time to return to camp, for it was now past seven o'clock, and to the north and west heaven and earth were veiled in inky gloom, but to the south and east lay a panorama so gloriously lovely that the sight of it would itself repay the toil of a journey hither.

To the right lay the grand cone of Ararat, white for thousands of feet with the everlasting snow, now gold and scarlet in the setting sun, and only showing his seamed 'sides where they neared our own level. Behind him was a sky of such pure pale blue as occurs only in these latitudes, and its colour was flecked here and there with just a touch of white. It was one of those skies that are rarely seen except accompanying a thunderstorm, and against it the giant mountain stood revealed as clearly as a painter could have hoped to limn it. Further to the north, at least as beautiful, was the triple-peaked Alaghez, its more conical head cutting the clear sky as clean as a knife, and the more obtuse points picked out with snow, revealing a host of hitherto unseen beauties.

I could have lingered for hours over such a transcendent spectacle; but the rain began to come down, and perforce we set our faces for our canvas homes, having ascertained beyond doubt that the Russian force opposed to us could not exceed, if it reached, the number of 30,000 men all told, and the general opinion was that it did not comprise more than 25,000.

And now I have to tell a story of a campaigning incident that will show some of the unforeseen difficulties with which a correspondent has to contend. When we had gone about half an hour into the teeth of the inky clouds that were massed in the west, they were riven by flash after flash of red lightning, which positively remained for some seconds like a fiery pillar in the heavens. My young horse

became restive, and with a light heart I bade my companions go on, as I would follow. Rash promise! fatal politeness! Before I had mastered the animal I was cut off from mankind as effectually as though a solid wall were built around me. In a narrow pass, it was yet impossible to see the mountains on either side, for the "blackness of darkness" came down all at once, like the drop curtain of a theatre, and nothing could be seen save when "the pillar of fire by night" again raised itself in the firmament.

So long as we were in the pass it was easy enough to keep to the road, in spite of blinding rain and hail, that cut the skin till the blood came. But when we gained the open, the horse and his rider lost all count of direction or distance. For three mortal and terrible hours we were forced to wander over a "blasted heath," which soon became a morass, every step a peril, every few yards a certain stumble. To lead the horse was worse than to ride, for one had not the aid of the animal's fine instinct; and with arms so frozen that it was impossible to hold the reins, with boots full of water to the knees, and soaked to the skin in spite of a Cording's waterproof, behold me helpless, hungry, thirsty, adrift nigh upon midnight, within easy reach of a camp, which yet could not be seen, still less found. Not a pipe could be lit, for the rain extinguished even tinder fire. There was nothing for it but to keep moving for the sake of the horse, and to wait the weary end of the tempest.

All of a sudden the brave beast pricked up his ears and voluntarily started into a sharp trot. He saw a light, and going at a break-neck pace down and up the steep sides of a rocky ravine, he landed me in front of—ye gracious powers!—a huge fire. The scene here was one that would tell on the walls of the Salon or the Academy. Imagine the rudest Scottish bothie or Irish mud cabin that was

ever yet built on a mountain side, its roof tumbled in except a small patch by the open doorway; place in this doorway four red-calico-coated Bashi-Bazouks, with red fezzes bordered with black Astracan wool, all smoking like furnaces, and four shivering horses trying to get at least their heads under cover. Imagine for a door the upturned body of a rude bullock wagon; and imagine as a suppliant for admission to such a scene a Briton not unused to London comforts.

But I am bound to say no "squire or lord of high degree" was ever more hospitable than these poor shivering Bashi-Bazouks, so far as their means went and their will. They found, heaven knows where, a bit of a plank. They made the stranger stretch himself on it; they drew off his boots, they dried his clothes, they tore down some of the yet remaining fragments of the roof to feed the fire, and they were more than rewarded by a fragment of black bread found in a saddle-bag, and by a morsel of tobacco produced from a nearly empty pouch. They wanted no reward, in fact, and when the dawn came, and they put the stranger in his way to the camp, they stoutly refused the money that must be somewhat scarce with them. Let even Bashi-Bazouks have their due, and I was glad this evening, by the merest chance, to meet them, and reward them in another way for their unaffected kindness to a soaked, shivering, and weary wanderer.

It was with no genial feelings, therefore, that I was awoke this morning from a forenoon slumber by an alarm gun from the eastward, though I am bound to say that the promptness of the camp's response to the bugle calls left no time for vain regret at the loss of "pleasant dreams and sweet repose." In ten minutes every battalion was in its place, and the cavalry camp was empty, while the artillery

was limbered up and ready for movement wherever wanted. But if the reply to the alarm was prompt, the alarm itself was a trifle late. The fact is, the enemy "closed on his left" camp at daybreak, and sent out five or six thousand cavalry, with a couple of light batteries, to protect the movement. In the course of the morning this force advanced as far as about three miles from our then front, and it was only when it was in a fair way of going home that it was discovered. However, it then steadily proceeded on its way covered by a rear-guard of dragoons and a few Cossacks; of which more anon.

Once our alarm was given, the Mushir determined to put in action a plan he had already decided on. This was no less than a complete change of front, placing us parallel to the Russian consolidated camps and slightly overlapping them on both flanks. The newly-formed camp was found to be already entrenched behind one of the largest of the hills already mentioned as dotting the plain of Ani, or, as it is variously called, of Subatan.

Our first division occupied the terraced heights examined by our first cavalry brigade the day before; and again I attached myself to the staff of Mustapha Safvet Pacha. We sent out a small cavalry force from our left, under Edhem Pacha, of the 2nd Brigade of Cavalry; but among the squadrons were three of Circassians, under Redschild Bey, from the 1st Brigade. By dint of rapid movement the Tcherkesses "won round" by the village of Subatan towards the new Russian camp on the enemy's right, and managed to get in the rear of three squadrons of heavy dragoons and one of regular Cossacks.

And now ensued one of the prettiest cavalry encounters ever seen. It is admitted on all hands that both parties behaved admirably; and, having seen the whole affair from

beginning to end, I yet cannot award the palm. The Russians were slightly, but only slightly, outnumbered. There could not have been more than 350 to 400 Circassians engaged, and although some Koords joined in afterwards, the fight was settled before they reached the scene. The Tcherkesses tried to fall on the flank of the three squadrons of dragoons, the squadron of Cossacks being at this time at a little distance. Two of the squadrons wheeled round to receive the attack, and the third was dismounted behind a low ridge, or natural redoubt, to act as infantry, and they very naturally checked the charge; but as they remounted they were themselves charged by the Circassians, and fell back rapidly among their comrades. Then ensued an engagement at about four hundred yards.

The Russians are chiefly armed with old large-bore rifled carbines, converted on a system somewhat resembling that of Snider, but the breech-piece made of gun-metal and iron combined. These weapons are very heavy, and though made strong enough to last for a century, are not worth their weight, and are anything but good specimens of modern firearms. Indeed, one by my side, altogether made in Russia, is dated 1867, its "back sight" being a curiously complicated piece of mechanism, apparently designed to avoid then existing patents.

All the Turkish cavalry, except the Koords, are, as we have seen, armed with the early pattern Winchesters, whose fault is that the charge is too small and the bullet too light for effective work at any such distance as that at which the two parties were now engaged. Gradually, however, they closed, and then became mingled. It was not generally a hand-to-hand fight, but here and there it assumed that character; and one of the Russian officers especially distinguished himself as a swordsman, cutting down no

fewer than three Tcherkesses. Then once more they separated, and each body charged the other twice.

The squadron of Cossacks moving rapidly along a ravine, got on the left flank of the Circassians, and threw them into some confusion, during which the dragoons drew off, but in a few moments the Tcherkesses rallied and began a pursuit which did not cease until both dragoons and Cossacks were driven within their advance posts. Eighteen prisoners were taken by our men, and our loss is officially returned as twenty-six killed and twenty-seven wounded, among whom is Redschild Bey, with a bullet in the thigh.

The Russians left many dead—I hear forty—on the field, and their wounded are estimated as twice the number of ours. But the affair is of importance apart from its extent. It shows the superiority of the Winchester rifle at close quarters, and it leaves no reason to doubt the excellence of the better class of Circassian cavalry when properly led, for they could not be pitted against more trying material than the Russian “heavies;” and yet with no sensible superiority of strength they sent them to the right about, although no dragoons could have behaved more creditably than the three squadrons of regulars and one of Cossacks which served as the Russian rear-guard.

In the course of the evening the Tcherkesses were confronted by several thousand Russian cavalry, but naturally they were not going to renew the combat on any such terms. However, a good many shots were exchanged at absurd distances, and a few harmless shells were thrown at the long coats, whose chief, the representative of Schamyl, and Prince of Leshgie, arrived in camp during the evening.

Our artillery fire is believed by some to have been effective. Before nightfall all our force, except a small baggage guard, had moved to our new positions, where we shall probably rest to-morrow.

July 19.—Blessings be on the Mushir, but bother his activity! We were barely settled in the head-quarters camp last night, between eleven and twelve, and, oblivious of supper, I had hardly got to sleep, when the word was given to strike tents and shift to a position, not behind a hill, but in full view of the enemy on a terrace, on which a flat stone, wet with a heavy dew, served as my couch till daylight; for my tent, as luck would have it, with half a dozen others, went astray during our midnight flitting. I had as lief sleep on a tombstone in a shower of rain, but the discomfort of my situation, nevertheless, enabled me to see the Mushir at work, with his aides-de-camp, secretaries, and chiefs of scouts, by five o'clock this morning. Apart from scouting, however, and a few unimportant shiftings of battalions, he has given us a day's rest, and I only hope he will let us have one night's good sleep.

The Russians, during the afternoon, have been showing a good deal of movement within their camps. All their infantry have been out in front of their tents, enabling us to count nineteen battalions; and they have also massed their cavalry and artillery, but no aggressive action has come of it. The parade, however, is supposed to mean something for to-morrow, though whether a battle or a retreat we shall only know when the time comes. They would be mad to attack us here. In the course of the afternoon the promised Tcherkesses of Leshgie came into camp, singing martial songs more musical than the singular ditties in a minor key favoured by the Turks and Koords.

July 20.—Our force was increased yesterday by five battalions of the Kars corps, and a dozen more battalions of that army have been echeloned on our left, while a portion of our right has been thrown slightly forward. To meet this, the Russians have this morning made a move-

ment towards three hills situate in the more eastern moiety of the plain, and called Uch Tepé.

Head-quarters last night presented a scene that words and time alike fail me to describe, though the impossible must needs be attempted. Raschid Pacha, commanding the first division, asked a few of us after sundown to coffee and cigarettes in his tent, and for our delectation ordered up the band of the regiment of which Shefket Pacha is colonel. Among other *morceaux* performed by the band was a *pot pourri* composed in memory of the victory of Siven, and excited by the music, presently a body of Zaibaks, carrying lanterns, approached the Mushir's tent, and demanded permission to display before him their peculiar dances.

These Zaibaks belong to a Mussulman sect who have long cherished a conscientious objection to war, but of late they have been induced to enter the army and actually form one regiment of the Chasseurs of the Imperial Guard at Stamboul. They retain in this *corps d'armée* their picturesque dress and belt arms, and about twenty of them turned up last night, all wearing as a head-dress a sort of very high fez, bound with a low turban, blue hussar-like jackets with pendent sleeves, red and white striped shirts, and white baggy breeches, their legs being bare from the knee, or covered with blue cloth gaiters. In their brightly-covered cummerbunds were stuck knives and pistols, and each man brought with him his carbine.

These Anatolian dances are all pretty much of the same character; the movements being generally uncouth, while the music last night was chiefly furnished by a pipe capable of four notes, and a drum capable of one. But the effect was heightened by the surroundings. Even the grave Mushir, weighted with all his responsibility, condescended to join the circle which gathered round a couple of great

fires made of the wood which the Russians left in their batteries before Kars, and near him sat on camp-stools, or the ground, most of the generals of division and of brigade, with the whole of the head-quarters' staff.

Far over the valley the watchfires of the Russian camps twinkled dimly, more clearly burnt the wood at our advance posts, and the moon shed her silvery rays over the group of white tents, and helped to bring into stronger relief the gesticulating figures bounding or writhing around the burning piles. Presently the Mushir, tired of the monotony of the native music, ordered the band to play, and now the dancing certainly improved both in time and in vigour, and at length, when the men drew their bayonets, and acted a dagger ballet, they attained, it cannot be denied, something of the poetry of motion.

Although by the time the dances were over it was close on midnight, some soldiers now began to perform on this *al fresco* stage a farce which lasted for more than an hour and a half, and which, before it was finished, I began to think would rival in duration a Chinese tragedy. It was very funny, however, and the plot turned on an intrigue between a veiled lady and her duenna or companion on the one hand, and a kind of mountebank *Othello* on the other, under the very eyes of the lady's husband. There were five principal and several subordinate characters, all dressed in special costume, evidently designed for this particular effort of the Turkish dramatist, and I am given to understand that the wardrobe of this company of military players covers a very considerable *répertoire*. The principal character was taken by a low comedian of most remarkable talents. His vocal as well as his facial expression was of the very highest order in his special line, and neither in London, nor Paris, nor Vienna, is there

an artist exceeding in natural talents for comedy of a broad type this poor soldier bent on the amusement of his comrades in arms. And they were amused, too, in all ranks, if shouts of laughter may be taken as a test; not less at the smart repartee of the dialogue and the occasional jokes of a not too straitlaced type, than at the by-play and the use made of a wonderful red robe, and a still more wonderful towering and comic turban.

It was close upon one o'clock when craving for sleep drove me from the scene, but I could hear long after the occasional music of the band, and the frequent roars of laughter of the audience, which comprised all ranks, from general officers to Koord camel-drivers. And this gives me a welcome opportunity of saying how kind and genial are the Turkish superior officers. There is no nonsense about one of them, and a body of more frank, manly, good-humoured, kind, and considerate soldiers is not to be found in the world. Raschid, Reis Ahmed, Chefket, and Chahin Pachas might pass for jolly English squires; Ali Pacha for a staid British merchant; and neither Edhem nor Mustapha Safvet Pacha would seem out of place at Aldershot or the Curragh.

I speak of Turks only, not of the many excellent foreign officers in their service; and I cannot help saying that there is not to be found in any European army a body of general officers whom one could regard with more hearty esteem than I have been forced to feel for the Ottoman generals with whom I have been brought, a virtual stranger, into close and friendly contact. But they are not merely "good fellows," they are, mostly, as I cannot but feel, good men also. If many of them were Christians, they are soldiers of whom we should have little memoirs, of an evangelical turn, published *à la* Hedley Vicars or Havelock. Without ostentation, or any

sign of *mauvaise honte*, nothing is more common than in an interval of an important movement, to see the general directing it leave his staff, and retire, a few yards apart, to pray, with his sword stuck in the ground to represent the kubla, or point of prayer, with the face towards Mecca, sometimes even without that aid to devotion. It is impossible not to respect such men, however one may differ with them and their creed.

NEAR ANNI, *July 22*.—I believe one of our difficulties lies in finding a convenient place for a pontoon bridge across the Arpa river, though when the place is found how the bridge is to be constructed is a problem, for we have neither wood in the vicinity, pontoons, nor barrels; there are, I believe, no pontoons in Kars, and I doubt if that city could furnish enough barrels to make a bridge across the Cherwell at Oxford, or the Cam by King's College, in the sister university of England. Then about one hundred fathoms of three-inch rope exhaust our stock in that direction; so where the bridge is to come from is rather puzzling. Perhaps this most conglomerate force has found out the art of making a pontoon bridge without any materials at all; and you may depend on it, that in the interests of Chatham I shall keep my eye on any new discoveries that may be made here in military engineering.

However, as we got across the Kars river by bridges made of bullock wagons, there is no reason to suppose a deeper and wider torrent will present to us any insurmountable difficulty. As for regular bridges, there is one at Keuprikeui, and there are three at Kars, these being, so far as I know, all the viaducts on this side of Baiboort. It is understood, however, that a cavalry force will to-night or to-morrow night go farther afield in search of a passage, for nothing is more certain than that, if our present inten-

tions hold good, we are to invade at least the province of Erivan, supported on the right, though inactively, by Ismail Pacha's force, and on the left more effectually by at least one of the two divisions at Kars.

Whether we are not giving the enemy time to get up heaps of support, it "is not for the likes of me" to say ; but the Mushir cannot be blamed for any delay that has occurred or may occur. He has received the most peremptory orders from Stamboul not to risk a foot of the territory he has regained by any attempt to increase his holding ; and I am well assured that even a small defeat now would count against him at Constantinople far more than all his remarkable success has told in his favour. Indeed, a little failure, after all has gone so well with him, would be taken as a sign that his luck was turning, and neither he, nor the Ottoman cause in this part of the empire can afford, therefore, to run any risks.

Yet it is beyond doubt aggravating to sit here, day after day, on these mountain terraces, and watch what we believe to be a smaller force of the enemy, steadily and stolidly staring at us. I speak what I know to be the feeling of this army, which will never be content until at least an attempt is made to reach Erivan and Gumri—it may even be Tiflis. But I also know that the mushir commanding is bound by considerations of which the army at large can know nothing, but on which, if I do not mistake, the Russian leaders are counting a good deal.

On Friday evening they sent over here a *parlementaire* with a white flag, for the purpose of—*credat Jūdæus!*—arranging for the exchange of a Cossack private named Alexis Gouldieff, whom we took prisoner in the cavalry fight I described in my last. The envoy was received with due formality at the outposts, and, having had his eyes bandaged, was conducted to the Mushir's tent, where he

delivered a letter from the secretary of the general commanding the Russian forces, M. Tcherniaffsky. The best of it is that, though we have a prisoner corresponding to the description in the Russian letter, he did not give on his capture the same name that is mentioned in the demand for exchange ; but even if he is the man so strangely "wanted" we could not give him up at present, for he is lying dangerously wounded in Kars Hospital. A letter to this effect was courteously returned to the Russian general by his messenger, who in a couple of hours after his arrival, his eyes being again bandaged, was conducted to the out-posts and sent on his way.

But it is impossible to believe that the Russians had no other object in sending the white flag than the exchange of this single Cossack prisoner. Why this individual should have so much influence exerted on his behalf, why if there was to be an exchange it should not have been a general one, and a dozen other questions of the sort naturally occur. The only solution of the problem that arises in my mind is, that the enemy wanted to see our position from a nearer point of view than from the vigilance of our vedettes would have been altogether safe otherwise ; and if this were really the object, he was welcome to all he saw, for he could hardly but be dissuaded by his view from any notion he might have had of attacking us.

Yesterday, there being nothing doing, I rode over to have a look at the ruins of the ancient Armenian city of Anni or Ani, which lie about twenty minutes to the south of our extreme right, and I must say that there is a great deal to repay a visit in what Murray's "Guide to Turkey in Asia," with its usual blundering, does not think worthy of a line. Premising that I am no archæologist, there seems to be here enough to furnish a learned paper for some of

the societies which especially affect antiquarian lore. The city is built on the edge of a steep ravine, which effectually protects it on two sides. The other two are guarded by walls and round towers, not later, at a guess, than the fourteenth, or early in the fifteenth century.

These walls and towers are in a wonderful state of preservation, and many parts of them are absolutely perfect. But the town itself, which covered a space of three-quarters by half a mile, and contained many architectural monuments, if we may judge by the fragments, is a wilderness and a desolation. Hardly anything remains but a couple of what may have been tombs, but rather resemble covers for fountains, and have a distant resemblance to the conduit at Lichfield; two round towers of brick and stone—minarets perhaps—not far from perfect, although ruined at the top, and the bulk of a building almost in what we should call the Queen Anne's style; that is, of brick, with white stone dressings, such as those we see at Queen Anne's Gate in St. James's Park.

I know nothing whatever of this city and its history, but it is doubtless described by Hamilton and Texier, who, according to Kiepert's map, would seem to have visited it. But I hope the next archæologist or architect who may be passing this way, or be in this part of the world, will make a point of critically examining and describing what I do not exaggerate in calling some of the most interesting and picturesque remains of a strong-walled Eastern city I have seen; a city whose strength ceased with the introduction of even imperfect artillery, and which bears evidence of a once high state of civilization in this now desolate land, in which man lives in houses not fit for "the beasts that perish," and in which the inhabitants have fallen back upon the most primitive form of industry and the earliest means of accumulating wealth, the tending of flocks and herds,

without the smallest effort to improve the breed of the one or to increase the produce of the other.

I have already borne testimony to the excellence of the temporary hospital at Kars, under exclusively Turkish direction, and I have to-day looked in at the field hospital of this army, which is in charge of the two German medical men attached to the Mushir's head-quarters, Drs. George Schoeps and Rosenfeld, who tell me the very satisfactory news that the sickness of this force has been about three per mille per diem, and there is not a serious case under their charge. Indeed, of the "sick" more than two-thirds have only such small ailments as are perfectly consistent with a continuance of their duty ; for in this army a man does not try to put himself on the sick list if he has a pimple on his cheek-bone or a scratch from a brier on the back of his hand, as has been known among other troops.

I hear also that the sanitary state of the outlying divisions of this *corps d'armée* is equally satisfactory, and we have as yet no reason to dread the plague and other scourges that were so confidently predicted for us. The prisoners say, however, that the Russian army has very many of the men always ill ; but prisoners' stories cannot always be taken on trust. Naturally, with the armies facing each other, and with the advance posts in all but actual contact, little affairs happen several times nearly every day, in which some poor devil of a Circassian, or Koord, or Cossack, regular or irregular, is "dropped," without in the least affecting the issue which has to be decided.

I believe the force of the enemy has rather diminished than increased within the last few days, though the tents remain, as we do not see the battalions at some of the blocks of tents parade morning and evening as we did before. In fact, here, *vis-à-vis*, both sides are playing an

absurd little game of "brag" by showing every man they have got, and I do not think either side is in the least deceived by the doings of the other in this respect. Our spies convince the Mushir that he has not more than 27,000 Russians to count with, and my own observations conduce, I will not say to a conviction, but to a persuasion that this estimate is near the mark.

NEAR ANNI, *July 26*.—Circumstances alter cases; and circumstances have arisen since my last despatch which would seem to necessitate the postponement, at least for the moment, of our little trip across the frontier. What those circumstances are I have already indicated. I learn, however, on the very highest authority, that we are not likely to remove bodily from our present position for a fortnight, unless some exceptionally favourable opportunity of attacking *Messieurs les Russes* should present itself, and they seem as little disposed to give us the opportunity as we are permitted to make one for ourselves. It would not be true to say that they sit stolidly opposite to us, for they now and again show quite a remarkable degree of aimless activity.

Their cavalry reconnaissances are almost as frequent as the thunderstorms, and of them we have always one—sometimes two or three—per diem. Four or five times a week our outposts look as a matter of course for the advance of a certain number of Russian cavalry, with or without one or two light batteries, which pass along our extended front, sometimes in one, sometimes in another direction, seldom coming within range, and generally sheering off, even if only a couple of squadrons of our fellows show their horses.

Yesterday morning there was an unusually strong demonstration of this description, but the enemy were never nearer than one and a half miles, although there were six

regiments of them, or perhaps, nearly 4,000 men, exclusive of the gunners of the two light batteries which accompanied the dragoons, of whom the column was chiefly composed. We showed on our right about 800 men; and whether the Muscovs thought this was only the advance guard of a larger force or not, at any rate they never let them get nearer than a couple of miles. Under these conditions the "butcher's bill" was *nil*; and as the enemy must by this time be perfectly acquainted with the look of our camp, it is not easy to see what they expected to gain beyond an outing for exercise and drill, and they may try these outings once too often. I suppose they can't make out why we don't attack them, and it may well puzzle them; and they are on the matutinal look out for the onslaught every day. But they may rest easy for a little while, though it is sorely against the will of this army and its chief.

We have heard a good deal of the holy war, and of all Central Asian Islam coming to the help of the Caliph. Well, long-lasting storms begin in little drops, and yesterday we had an earnest of the hordes who are to help us to drive the invaders within their northern fastnesses in the person of one exceedingly good-looking Afghan sergeant, whose uniform, if it had only not been adorned with Turkish buttons, might very well pass for the staff undress rendered familiar to Londoners last season on the persons of the two native officers who were in temporary attendance on the Prince of Wales. What he is to do, and whether he is to be followed by a contingent, remain moot points; but he has the disadvantage of speaking only his own language, Hindostanee, and English, so that, "save his good broadsword," he is not likely to be of great use here just at present. Yet, as he is one of the domestics of the Prince of Wales's household, away on leave, he has been made

a lieutenant and aide-de-camp to Ali Pacha, commanding the cavalry.

Of greater practical value are two excellent strong squadrons of cavalry of the reserve who have turned up from Diarbekr, and who were yesterday evening reviewed by the Mushir. I could see his excellency's eyes glisten with pleasure as he looked at these regulars, for they have all served their three years, and are bound for nine more,—almost the first specimens of a force which Turkey has hitherto possessed only on paper, but which is beginning to have a very tangible existence.

It was anything but pleasure that was in his eyes or on his face when he came to half a squadron of Circassians who had accompanied the dragoons part of the way, and who, having deserted in the first place and returned to their homes, have now, *en route* for the camp, been exercising their natural propensity to thieving, which only strict discipline can eradicate. They were a hang-dog looking lot,—about “the meanest set,” as an American would put it, that the Tcherkess colonies in Turkey have yet sent out. Not a visage among them would have successfully pleaded for mercy to an Old Bailey jury, and they certainly appeared to be already ordered for execution when the Mushir told them that if he heard any more complaints, he would hang the culprit; and if he could not identify him, one or two should be chosen by lot for summary dismissal from a world these rag-tag and bobtail of a gallant race do not adorn.

There must be wide-spread discontent in the Russian ranks, especially among the Mussulmans, to whom Mehemet Ghazi, Prince of Leshgie, issues periodical publications in the shape of strongly-worded proclamations, invoking their loyalty to the ties of race and religion. Whether

these have any effect or not, I cannot say; but we are continually getting deserters and very willing prisoners, all Mahometan Cossacks, who turn up in the early morning with or without their horses—great, gaunt, raw-boned, generally Roman-nosed steeds, beside which the horses of Turkey look mere ponies. I would back them for a good round sum, however, to outlast the Tartar giants, one of which I had measured to-day, and found him 16 hands 2 inches.

The last of the deserters comprised a batch of three—a lieutenant and two corporals. The former spoke a very little French, and I got out of him that in the next battle whole regiments of Russians will lay down their arms and surrender to any force of Turks! However, as a deserter is almost always a liar, as this particular deserter has one of the most ruffianly countenances I ever saw, and as in front of Kars already the Turks have suffered from the pretence of a Russian squadron who first lowered their flag and then fired upon the unsuspecting Ottomans, I shall wait to see this surrender *en masse* before placing implicit belief in it.

As our contemplated operations are, it is to be hoped, only postponed, and that not from any considerations usually influencing the movements of armies, and as this position must be the base from which they will be conducted, if they take place, I have taken the trouble to draw the accompanying map of our position and, so nearly as can be seen, that of the enemy.

Their camps cover a large front, but are far from deep; ours are scattered but strong, protected on the right by scarp'd hills, and virtually on the left resting on Kars, while inaccessible in the rear, save at two perfectly commanded points. In fact, not to put too fine a point on it,

we are too safe. If we were more exposed we might be, in spite of circumstances, more enterprising. I speak feelingly, for it is dull work sitting here doing nothing, and getting wet several times a day while engaged in that most distressing of all employments. I meant to make an excursion to Bayazid this week, but the Mushir has some objections, and it is not worth while to contest the point ; so I will run into Kars for a day or two on a visit to Faizy Pacha and Hussein Bey, and to get rid of a little fever engendered by perpetual moisture in the teeth of quinine and Cockle.

One reason for going to Bayazid is that we are continually receiving unintelligible and self-contradictory accounts of what occurs there. It is not a matter of great interest, because on that flank the Russian bolt has been shot ; but if Tergukasoff entirely disposed of Faick Pacha and Ismail Pacha, he might give us a little trouble. It seems that Faick had two battalions on his left the other day in a good position, but to all intents and purposes unsupported. They were surprised by 3,000 Russians, and after a seven hours' fight had to retire, leaving three guns to the enemy. But Tergukasoff's success was but short-lived. The battalions, virtually intact, fell back to the westward on Ismail Pacha, and the Russians promptly withdrew to their own territory on the news of his advance.

This is the best I can make out of half a dozen stories, each differing from the other ; and I am told at headquarters that it is no doubt the true state of the case. However, what is wanted on our right flank is a soldier. At present there are merely pachas in command there ; and it would not surprise me if the Mushir were to override etiquette, and supersede the Governor-General of Koordistan and the other commander.

CHAPTER XI.

July 27.—So much had been written in the very early morning of yesterday, when I was told that my very excellent friend Mustapha Safvet Pacha had been out all the livelong night on Russian territory. Before midnight the cavalry of the right, to the number of 1,500 men, were away round the ruins of Anni and across a ford which there exists, right upon the soil of holy Russia.

Now, repose is a very good sort of thing for a man who is not very well, and who has been suffering from a kind of low fever; but I am not sure that a good sterling bit of excitement does not beat it out of the field. I must answer for it in my own case, simply because no sooner had I learnt and verified the fact than I felt better than for a week. But the excitement began to reach a head when we learnt that the invasion of Russia by Mustapha was not to pass without protest, and that already a strong, in fact, a very strong column of cavalry and artillery had left the Russian camp to chastise the insufferable insolence of this dashing "captain of horse."

The column, strong though it was, did not seem in too much of a hurry about its movement of vengeance. It took three hours from its start to cover a distance to the southward of about eight miles, and it was just over against our advanced battery on the right flank, and at the mouth of the northern end of the Anni ravine, when my watch told half-past nine. The column was imposing enough. It had one horse-artillery battery—judging from the shells, what we should call 16-pounder

guns—on each flank, and it consisted of nine regiments, which (I can hardly find another word) demonstrated for the space of one whole hour, while their left battery opened fire at something like 2,000 yards.

A correspondent of the *Daily News* is, I understand, with the enemy here, and we shall be very curious to see his account of this cavalry movement when the time comes round for its arrival in these parts. For example, we shall be glad to know what sort of artillery fire the Russians call that which, going on for a whole hour at a distance of little over a mile, hurts nobody, even when the gunners have black batteries and black squadrons for a target against a green hillside? Secondly, we shall be anxious to learn what the whole of the Russian movement amounted to, except getting the men thoroughly soaked in the usual thunderstorm; and, above all, we shall be desirous to learn why, just as there seemed to be a fair chance of a general engagement, the battalions brought to—let me say—support the cavalry, retired up some hills, the summits of which are known to be fortified. If my *confrère* throws any light upon these points, he will be adding a page to history. At present we are as much in the dark as though we were trying to hook salmon in Norway, or cleaning up our guns for the moors.

As I have said, for a whole hour six or eight Russian guns pounded away at a distance certainly not exceeding two thousand yards—a few thick metres—and from one battery of 9-centimetre Krupps, and half a battery of mountain guns we replied with what effect we might. And while the nine Russian regiments of cavalry were demonstrating, to give time for a couple of battalions of infantry to come up perhaps, the whole of the cavalry of our right wing was making its way round Anni to effect a junction

with the party of the reconnaissance, which held its ground on the left bank of the Arpa river, and even sent two squadrons far forward in the direction of Gumri, until they were stopped by an infantry camp which the Russians have within the last few days formed on the hills twelve miles from and exactly opposite our right, which, as I have before said, rested on the ancient and ruined Armenian city. They saw enough, however, to show them that a lodgment upon the Russian bank is very easy if we only silence a battery which has been established there, probably for the purposes of to-day, as they did not perceive it in the morning.

By half-past ten the Russian cavalry had demonstrated the fact that they were exposed to a good deal of fire to very little purpose, and they withdrew out of range, taking their inoffensive battery with them, and just in time to avoid a very general cavalry engagement which would certainly have ensued if they had remained where they were for another half-hour.

Then they tried a manœuvre that Macaulay's school-boy could have seen through. They sent two regiments of cavalry against our right centre, as if they would ride roughshod over entrenchments and bayonets, Martini-Peabody rifles, and the terraced sides of mountains rising at a very rapid angle. A few squadrons of irregulars thrown across this part of the front easily defeated whatever we may in courtesy suppose to have been the object of this manœuvre. As they fell back our battalions along the right and right centre sent our skirmishers to hold the ground, which they very effectually did, for in doing it they were entirely unopposed. Steadily and slowly our cavalry pressed forward, the movement being conducted by his Excellency Raschid Pacha, commanding our right wing, assisted by Mehemet Bey, and when they gained

half a mile of ground they were at liberty to go on again, for the skirmishers were close at their heels. I must confess that I conceived we showed a want of enterprise in pushing our guns forward. It is always so, and until our generals learn that light guns, well horsed as these are, can go anywhere cavalry can go, this want of enterprise there will always be. "Yavash," slowly, is the bane of Turkish armies.

And now for nearly two hours there is literally nothing to record, save the arrival of a couple of Russian battalions on a small plateau three miles from our most advanced posts; and on this plateau, drawn up in open column of companies, with their left flank towards us, they had the excellent discretion to remain. For myself, I mounted the 800 feet of almost scarpd rock to the summit of what I will venture to call Crag Hill—a sort of natural fortification in front of our right, and out in the plain. Here, by the kindness of the colonel who held this very safe post with two battalions and two mountain guns, I was refreshed with coffee, cigarettes, and the unimpeded view of the general and continued retrogression of the Russians just as slowly as our cavalry advanced.

By one o'clock our force had covered the villages of Yahnalik and Djala, and all the space between them and the right bank of the Arpa river, while Mustapha Pacha was still on the left bank. But it was useless for him to stop there, as there was no immediate intention to occupy the soil of holy Russia, nor will it be occupied until we can make very sure of keeping it. By half-past one the cavalry skirmishers all along our right and right centre were in close contact over very broken ground; and it is only right to say that both sides were very steady, and, being steady, were at very respectful distances, so that the continuous

file-firing did very little hurt. For three hours the guns had now continued silent, and our men were so far in advance that cannon might be opened on them at any minute; but for some reason—perhaps good luck is as good as any other—the Krupps did not “speak” for another hour. Meanwhile a few skirmishers from the redif and nizam regiments took up the ground to the right of Yahnalik as far as the Arpa, and the cavalry were ordered to close by squadrons on the left, and this they did, regulars and irregulars—Tcherkesses, Koords, Bashi-Bazouks of Sivas, and dragoons—quite at their leisure.

At two o'clock the Russians from their more southern camp sent out eight strong battalions of infantry over the slopes of the hill called Kezil Tépé, which lies in front of part of that camp, as if they had just woke up to the possibility of something enormous being done. The whole of their more northern camp had been under arms for some hours, but had done nothing. Very gallantly did these eight battalions come out for a mile or two till they began to feel that our cavalry might not be altogether inoperative in a broken country. They then proceeded to clear their front by a battery to the south foot of that hill, and as nobody wanted to stay there, and for our purposes the day was over, the front was cleared as they wished, though our fellows took their time about going, and frequently turned and made cigarettes while “retreating,” pressed alike by Cossacks and by cannon.

I was smoking one of these cigarettes given me by a Sivas man across a ravine near the front when a couple of dozen whistles about my ears showed me I was too far forward. Seeing no chance of gaining a Victoria Cross, I trotted towards our lines pretty quickly, I confess; but my retreat was kindly covered by half a dozen of the Sivas men, who never broke their walk, and, I am glad to say, received no injury.

From three till four o'clock our advanced battery of the right centre exchanged shots with the Russian battery at the foot of Kezil Tépé, while the Muscov infantry fell back upon the secure slopes of the hill on which we know they have some of the guns of position which they removed from the north-east of Kars. There is no doubt that if these battalions had not retired, the Mushir would have been compelled, even at so late an hour of the day, to make the engagement a general one in support of the ground we had already gained towards the Arpa, and of our right centre advanced posts.

In sum the effect of the day is decidedly favourable to the Turkish arms. We have gained ground. From one portion more of the empire of the Sultan the foot of the invader has been driven ; and, if our hold is not actually secure, it is only threatened by one battery on the Russian bank, which we shall doubtless silence to-day or to-morrow. Our cavalry and part of our infantry has fought the enemy fairly in the open, and has won ; while our artillery has been shown at least not worse than some of the Russian field artillery. I am told that on the day, important in itself, and more important for what it may lead to, we have only lost half a dozen men. This seems small ; but, on the other hand, it is by no means incredible. The day and its proceedings may seem inconsistent with what I wrote yesterday, but they are not really so.

Moukhtar Pacha may for the nonce be compared to Nelson putting the telescope to his blind eye. If a marshal commanding is not to have a discretion as to a reconnaissance, his post is not one of independent responsibility, and yet all to-day arose simply out of a reconnaissance, and, in its turn, may conduce to greater, higher, and more difficult things still.

I did not reach camp till eight o'clock last evening, and

was then soaked, so that as I write this while the sun is just peeping over Mount Alaghez, there are reasons for the brevity of a description the imperfections of which I know now that it is finished, and it is too late to mend them.

KARS, *July 28*.—As there was nothing to do yesterday at the camp of Moukhtar Pacha, I rode over here for supplies and a Turkish bath, which is one of the few things to be found good under the shelter of the great Armenian fortress, and I was in time to hear the testimony of a prisoner who had been in the morning taken by our outposts as he was trying to desert from the Russians. Whether he is to be regarded as a deserter or a prisoner does not much matter, for he is a very willing victim, being a Pole. A man of shrewd intelligence is this fellow, knowing well what he is saying, and I should judge his information to be generally trustworthy, more particularly as parts of it cannot be held altogether flattering to some of the Turkish military authorities.

For the sake of making his story understood—and it is well worth telling—I must reverse the order in which he confided it to us. He was detailed as one of the servants—the personal attendant—of one of the Russian artillery commandants, waiting on him and his friends at table and during the hours of relaxation, when the tedium of campaigning is relieved by the flow of sweet champagne, even when the men are starving. In this capacity he was satisfied to remain, for he had no fighting to do, and he lived, on the whole, pretty well. But in an evil hour his horse was lost or stolen, and report being made thereof to his master, he was, as a punishment for carelessness, sent back to his battery, one of the sergeants of which had a bitter animosity against him, and charged him with having got rid of his horse for the purpose of doing a

Polish injury to the Russian service. The man was threatened with arrest and the knout if he did not find his steed, and, to use his own words, he thought if he went to Kars the Turks would not cut off his head. Accordingly he was making his way hither when he was caught by some of our vedettes and brought to the artillery commandant, Hussein Bey, who, many English readers will be delighted to learn, has kept a closely written-up journal of the siege of Kars, including the preliminary operations, and showing the errors committed on both sides during the campaign, so far as these came within his personal knowledge. This journal we may hope to have published during the coming winter, both in Turkish and English.

But to return to our deserter. His master was one of the officers commanding the artillery in the attack upon the Mushir's camp at Sevin, and he says the Russian army in Asia would have been annihilated that night if the Turks had resolved upon a pursuit, for ammunition of all kinds had given out when the evening came on, and the invaders withdrew.

Now, I happen to know, as a matter of fact, that this was more than suspected in the camp at Sevin, and that a pursuit, or rather an interception of the retreat, was actually proposed. But the balance of opinion at the then head-quarters was—Moukhtar Pacha being absent at Helias, or 'Elias—against it, and while the discussion lasted the precious opportunity passed. There is no doubt now that General Melikoff had a most marvellous escape, for even a couple of battalions with a sufficiency of cartridges could have slain or taken prisoner the whole of the force he had at Sevin.

During the retreat from Sevin, the Pole says, the men were four whole days without food, save such as they could

pick up along the road, and that went a very little way ; but that, Cossacks being sent on in front to bring up supplies, on the evening of the fourth day each man received one pound of bread. If there had been any pursuit during the whole of these four days the Russians would have been seriously damaged ; for more than half their men, in all branches of the service, fell out along the road from fatigue and exhaustion, due to want of food. During a still longer period the horses had no barley, and were incapable of any prolonged exertions, and yet the prisoner bears witness that during this time the superior Russian officers were swilling champagne every day—evidences of the fact being, as I can testify with my own eyes, left behind in their—subsequently our—camp at Sarakamish, where more than one assorted dozen of taper-necked bottles of various brands cumbered the ground.

After leaving Sevin, the artillery branch to which the Pole and his master belonged was transferred to the front of Kars, against which, he says, the Russians brought up sixty siege guns, though in this number it is thought the man must include the 9-centimetre Krupps, more especially as he says forty of the sixty were brought back from Sevin. Two of the besiegers' guns were disabled by their own firing, and twenty others were struck by the Turkish shells and injured, but not so as to be beyond repair. Twelve limbers, he says, were set on fire, and two supply magazines blown up. He puts the loss of the Russian artillery from the fire of the Kars guns at seventy, besides one hundred and fifty-six wounded.

When the siege had lasted a fortnight it was resolved, he continues, to assault the fortress, and all preparations were made to send out strong columns at midnight ; but by some accident one of the guns of an earthwork went

off, and drew on the fire of the Turks, who continued to plunge shot and shell in their direction all night. And it is a corroboration of the man's story, that there was just at that period of the siege a night alarm vigorously replied to by the Ottoman artillery. The Pole says his master's remark was that they had not caught the Turks napping. He went on to say that there was great quarrelling among the Russian generals, and being asked how he could know, he replied that he could not help knowing, for they quarrelled in his master's tent. It was generally believed, he tells us, that General Loris Melikoff had not his heart in the campaign, because the Czar had refused to make him a highness.*

Most of the generals were in favour of dividing the Russian forces in Asia from the first into two columns, one to operate against Kars, the other against Erzeroum and Moukhtar Pacha. We know that if this plan had been adopted we should not now be on the Russian frontier, and the Pole says it was Melikoff who flatly refused to adopt it. But, frittering away his forces, he gave the Mushir time to gather the army with which we have now turned the tables upon the invaders. The deserter adds that on the 27th instant the whole force, which he estimates at 40,000, had three days' rations given to them, and it was rumoured among the men that this was preparatory to falling back on Gumri. The prisoner added, in conclusion, not without a certain touch of disdain for both Russians and Turks, "and I am a Catholic;" but whether this was meant as an asseveration of the truth of his tale is more than I can say. However, his story is so consistent, on the whole, with ascertained facts, that we

* At the beginning of November a Russian telegram announced that Melikoff had at length been made a prince.

are all inclined to believe it, notwithstanding the excellent rule against trusting deserters' information.

In an earlier portion of this diary I gave the official number of shots fired by the Turks from Kars as 17,458. But an account has now been taken of the stores remaining, and there being an inconsistency found in the accounts a rigorous investigation has been made, with the result that books and stores balance one another, and it is proved the Ottomans threw 19,264 large projectiles of one kind or another. I may also correct a slight misapprehension. There are only twelve Krupp siege guns in Kars; the rest, except a few Armstrongs and two or three shunt guns on other patterns, are bronze pieces on the Krupp principle, but made at Tophané.

These bronze guns do not wear so well as the steel and iron cannon, but they are much cheaper, and the material can be used over again. When they begin to "give" at the breach they are strengthened by an iron ring, and the Turks, until to-day, could not make out why, after a few shots, this rather increased than hindered the escape of gas. But it is clearly due to the galvanic action of the iron and the bronze, and it can be avoided by lining the iron ring with some non-conductor. Occasionally, when the shell bursts in the gun, it is found that the grooves have been straightened out, or that new grooves have been cut by the action of the iron projectile. From all of which it seems pretty clear that bronze as a material for heavy guns is doomed in the Turkish service after the war.

After one day's rest, part of the Turkish force under Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha was busy again this morning. The affair was none of our seeking. The Russians moved across the plain ten battalions of infantry, a good show of cavalry, and eighteen guns, including two light cavalry pieces, and attacked Great Yahni, one of the isolated hills

of which I have before spoken as studding the plain. This particular hill stands about a mile and a half to the north of Moukhtar Pacha's most advanced post on the left, and exactly in front of another hill, which is occupied by Nadja Pacha's brigade of the Kars division.

The reason we did not long ago occupy this hill, the summit of which much resembles a mansard roof, is that it is completely cut off from us by a deep ravine, and that an outpost there would have been too much exposed. What earthly reason the Russians could have for desiring to occupy a hill that does indeed command one portion of our position, but that would cost them a daily fight, and, is beside, distant from their nearest camp at least six miles across a plain virtually in the hands of our irregulars, is not clear, and for once I am disposed to disagree with Hussein Hami Pacha and Faizy Pacha, who believe that the attack was meant seriously.

For myself, I conceive that the Russians had no other object in view than a reconnaissance for the purpose of learning whether the union between the Kars division and the corps of Moukhtar Pacha, to which, as you know, three Kars brigades have lately been annexed, was close and intimate, or merely a contact between two separate bodies.

However, just before noon their column reached the foot of the hill, on the slopes of which we threw out three battalions. The attack of the enemy, who approached from the north, would have taken two brigades of Hussein Hami Pacha in flank, as they were drawn up on their original parades, but they executed a *volte-face* in good time, and were well disposed on their original hill, and on the plain in the immediate front of it.

The Russians attacked on five points, that is to say, they threatened five, two of these being on the left of

Chefket Pacha's left brigades, and three on the Kars side. But they only came "up to the scratch" at three points, and on two of these only for a moment. The only infantry fighting worth speaking of was on the isolated hill. Five battalions of the enemy got more than half-way round the hill when they came into collision with a battalion which had already been several times under fire in the Kars sorties, and which did not flinch, but, backed by the rest of its brigade—the third of the Kars division—met the Russians boldly on the north side of the hill. The enemy hesitated, wavered, got together again, and retired, as if trying to draw the Turks from the post of 'vantage on the hill; but before it could be seen whether the lure would succeed, the Turkish irregular cavalry came into action from the south of the hill, and round both its eastern and western slopes.

The Russian horse met the onslaught firmly, and covered the infantry well; but the artillery of Hussein Hami decided the matter, having the advantage of the ground, and being thus able to distinguish friends from foes, which the Russian gunners on the lower level could not do. Indeed, the only damage I can speak of as having been done by the Russian fire was the temporary disablement of one of our field pieces by a shot striking the trail-pin of the limber. The tangent scale of the same gun was broken at the same moment by another shot. When the Russians, after some three hours' manœuvring and fighting, retired, they left behind them twenty-two dead horses, some of them belonging to the artillery, and a little later

"None lingered now upon the plain
Save those who ne'er shall fight again."

The official return of the Kars division gives twenty-six

as the number of the enemy's dead left upon the field, and our own loss as three Tcherkesses and three Koords killed and four wounded. The total return of Russian dead is sixty-one. I do not know who counted the enemy's dead, but I do know that they must have been buried out of sight very quickly, for within an hour of the fight no more than three Russian corpses could be found on the scene of the engagement, and all three were of course stripped by the indefatigable Koords, who further, I regret to add, mutilated and outraged one of the dead bodies in a way familiar to frontier soldiers in India. This was more congenial work for the wretches than pursuing the retreating foe, who were allowed to depart, as usual, unmolested by anything save a few rather wild shells.

I hope the Mushir will soon be able to dispense with these Koords altogether. He has already ordered the disbandment of those enrolled at Bayazid ; and I am glad to say that, having found out the peasants who outraged the Russian grave in the Zidkhan Pass, he had sent Ismail Pacha, himself a Koord, an order that they shall be tried and punished. If I had never done another good action in my life, I should be proud of having denounced these wretches to the commander-in-chief, and I only regret that the distance is too great to permit me to go and have the pleasure of seeing them well flogged over the grave, the sanctity of which they outraged. Whether Ismail will carry out the order remains to be seen. But the Mushir is resolved to have no more trifling in this matter ; and when he makes up his mind to a course, I doubt if any Koord, be he Pacha or pillager, can turn him from it.

CHAPTER XII.

MOUKHTAR PACHA'S HEAD-QUARTERS CAMP, *July 30.*

—I got out from Kars this morning just in time to see a Russian movement which may be pregnant with important consequences, and which at any rate checks any further raids upon the territory of holy Russia without a regular battle. The enemy threw out his left from behind Kizil Tépé, and occupied the peninsula upon which Anni stands. As you are aware, our right nearly touches the ancient Armenian city, but we did not occupy it, or hold any great force on our extreme right, from a perhaps too great fear of extending our front overmuch.

At half-past ten o'clock a Russian column, which had carefully concealed its march behind the swelling ground of the plain, suddenly debouched to within a mile of the old fortifications, and calmly proceeded at once to pitch the tents which they had brought with them. Whether the actual possession of Anni would have been an advantage to us, I will not discuss. It is a moot point, on which, however, I entertain a very strong opinion. But it was so clearly an advantage to the Russians, that an attempt was made to prevent them from holding the ground they took up—a feeble attempt, which had much better not have been made, or if made should have been supported by our whole right wing. As it was, a few shells, a little skirmishing at absurd distances, some manœuvring which came to nothing, ended in the establishment of the third Russian camp on our front.

It is believed by some that this camp is occupied by a

reinforcement said to have been on the way from Nidji Novgorod ; but I do not see any reason to suppose this force can have yet arrived, and assuredly the camp behind Kizil Tépé is weaker than it was last week.

I have gone as near the enemy as prudence permitted, and counted their tents both with my glass and with the naked eye, and I have come to the conclusion that their infantry camp at Anni does not contain more than 4,000 to 4,500 men, while their cavalry there are something less than 1,000. They have two batteries of artillery, however, and I fancy part of a third. The movement is probably defensive rather than aggressive, and yet now the enemy has reached the plateau on which Anni rises above the ravine, we cannot dislodge him, unless we get Hussein Bey to send us out a couple of siege pieces from Kars, and in that case I confess no man could desire a better three-mile target than the Russian left camp presents from any part of the heights of our right. Practically, our only response to the occupation of the Anni ground is a shifting of the head-quarters tents so as to command a view of the ruins and their new neighbours.

An order was given to-night to Radshid Pacha to attack the Russian camp early to-morrow morning, and there is nothing that gallant ferik would like better ; yet a little while after the order was countermanded, for reasons I may appreciate, but if in a position of military responsibility should be unable to endorse.

August 1.—Not an incident marked yesterday, except the word may be applied to a magnificent sunset, followed by a terrible thunderstorm. In the afternoon I rode over and had a very close look at the Russian camp, first from the hills, and then under the guidance of a friendly Bashi-Bazouk of Sivas, at a distance of about a mile, after we

had spent over an hour in laboriously threading some intersecting ravines. My opinion of the force remains what I expressed yesterday ; and though this morning there is an alteration in the appearance of the camp, I am convinced there is no augmentation of the strength, but merely the transfer of some cavalry from the south to the north side.

Some movements of the enemy in the rear of the camp, however, early to-day, attracted our attention, and as a consequence a good portion of our right was got under arms. The enemy formed a strong column in the rear of their camp at Anni, and moved a good deal of ammunition from their centre at Kizil Tépé to their left ; but nothing came of it during daylight. In the evening Edhem Pacha, commanding the second brigade of cavalry, received information that we were to be attacked during the night ; but although the Russian watch-fires are burning with unusual brilliancy, and all our front is on the *qui vive*, nothing of the slightest importance happened until midnight.

August (Night) 2.—Once more “sits expectation i’ th’ air.” A few dropping shots during the night and early morning showed that the outposts were on the look out, and saw, or fancied they saw, something to fire at. But there was no reply, and considering that, after the usual evening thunderstorm, we had a bright night and faint moonlight, any one who has been on duty under such circumstances in the face of an enemy will understand that our men here can hardly be blamed if their imagination played them tricks now and again. For my own part, I believe the Russians had as much intention of attacking as of going on a voyage to the dog-star.

Is it too humiliating in the eyes of those paragons of perfection who make a virtue of early rising, to confess that your correspondent was still asleep when the sun had been

up a couple of hours to-day, and when a young aide-de-camp entered our tent with the news that his Excellency the Mushir had started on a reconnaissance on the left towards the Alexandropol road, with the intention of pushing forward a force on that highway? The fact remains that watching till after midnight for the Russian attack had produced its natural effect, and the commander-in-chief had started long before myself and my *confrères* knew anything of the matter; in very truth, too long to render it of any great use to follow him.

However, his excellency is good enough to treat the very few correspondents who are here with a confidence which I hope will not be abused, as a similar trust is said to have been abused on the Danube; and I am, therefore, able to tell you precisely what was done and what was not done. But first I have to put to casuists a nice problem in ethics.

Correspondents are, I believe, deemed neutrals. How far does one cease to be neutral when, throwing out a random suggestion in the course of miscellaneous and even hilarious conversation, he finds it seriously adopted, very much to the detriment of the enemy? It was my fortune on the day Anni was occupied by the Russians to say in an off-hand way that if I were general they should not stay there longer than I could get out a couple of big guns from Kars to our right. First thing this morning I am told that two of the siege guns are on their way, and will be in position by the morning, or next day at the furthest, ready to give the occupants of the Anni camp a taste of their quality.

Now, in case I should fall a prisoner into the hands of the Muscovs, I beg to say I bear them no malice; that I would rather see twenty Koords hanged than one Russian wounded; and that if any harm comes of

my suggestion, I claim the right to repudiate it. However, the very idea has put those who have heard of the approach of the guns into a state of great expectation, and I suppose we shall have a crowd on the right at sunrise to-morrow.

And now of the Mushir's expedition. His excellency did not return to head-quarters until sundown, and there were no movements of troops on the *route d'Alexandropol* to speak of. It is true one brigade was advanced a little from Hussein Hami's (or the Kars) division, but it is also true that for the moment the object of the reconnaissance failed, and that for a very prosaic reason—no water could be found in or near a position on the road suitable for the camp of even one brigade. At least that is the reason assigned to-night.

May I be allowed to suggest that, while it is beyond all doubt a reason, it is not the reason the camp was not formed five miles out on the Gumri road. If it is not petty treason to say so, the chief reason will probably turn out to be that a Turkish staff map misled the head-quarters, including the new chief of the staff, Hassan Pacha, who was unable to accompany the Mushir, owing to a slight attack of fever. Large as this new map is, it is very far from being as perfect as the Russian staff map, and in some of its "counterfeit presentments" of the ground it is counterfeit indeed. But I have ridden over every inch of our front, often a considerable distance out, and I have never found the Russian map erroneous in the very slightest particular. So another day has gone, and still we are not at Gumri.

And on this point I have a really good story to tell. Do not let it be supposed that, because there are barbarians on both sides, all are barbarians in this conflict. As

in the good old days of the ring the fistic champions used to shake hands on stepping within the ropes ; as in the good old days of duelling the mortal antagonists always saluted each other ; so, in like manner, Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha and General Loris Melikoff have been exchanging like courtesies this week. In the course of last Saturday's raid the Russians took as prize one or two arabas and the draught bullocks of a peasant, who was in the course of Sunday haled before the Russian chief and interrogated. The peasant, finding that he was not swallowed at a gulp, waxed bold, and with an instinctive idea of the cardinal principles of international justice, asked for the return of his carts and cattle, on the ground that they were his private property.

General Melikoff was good enough to say that if this were really so, he should have his property, and he sent the peasant with a letter to our side. As I sat at my tent door yesterday morning, waiting, like Mr. Micawber, for something to turn up, the man brought me a large letter addressed in French and Russian to the Governor of Kars. I took the man to his excellency's secretary, who conducted him to the Mushir, taking the air on his little camp-stool and chatting with Baron Schluga, my *confrère* of the *Neue Freie Presse*.

As Ismail Pacha is no longer governor of the province of Erzeroum, but is succeeded by the commander-in-chief, the latter naturally opened the letter addressed to his subordinate official, and replied to it that the arabas and bullocks did not belong to the army, and therefore might well be released, which was done. In anticipation of this result Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha, not to be outdone in courtesy, returned some camels that were harried by our cavalry the other day from a farm on the left bank of the Arpa river.

But the best remains to be told. In the course of conversation Loris Melikoff had asked of the peasant, evidently with the intention that his words should be repeated, "Why does not the Pacha come down out of his mountains into the plain to see me?" Ahmed Moukhtar told the man to reply to General Melikoff, on his behalf, that he would be happy to see the Russian commander and as many friends as he cared to bring in the vicinity of this camp, to a morning or evening party. Thus, you see, even "grim-visaged war" can now and again "smooth his wrinkled front," and I dare say if ever Melikoff and Moukhtar do meet they will think none the less of one another for this little interlude in the terrible drama.

Just before sunset this evening we thought we saw on the Russian hills, between Gumri and Erivan, a new Muscovite camp. This may or may not be the talked-of reinforcements; it may be a part of Tergukasoff's force finding its way from Erivan to Korum or its front; it may be only a small affair, but its extent cannot be determined.

I am sorry to say that some sickness is beginning to show itself in this camp. Tonsilitis is not uncommon, nor diarrhœa and even dysentery, while low fever and some erysipelas call for the advice of the two German and two Turkish doctors who are in charge of the head-quarters field hospital. This is not to be wondered at considering the extraordinary vicissitudes of temperature we are called upon to undergo. A variation from 136° in the sun by day to 33° and 35° at night is frequent—we had it yesterday, for example; and it is bad enough for those who can change their clothes frequently, and at sundown wrap up warmly. But for the men who have to take night duty, and have only the wretched "devil's dust" regulation overcoats—if, indeed, they are lucky enough to have them,

—the changes at this elevation are murderous. I was only twenty minutes at the hospital quarters to-day, and in that time twenty-two men presented themselves, while, I believe, about ten per cent. of the sick are sufficiently ill to be sent into Kars.

This change for the worse in the sanitary state of the camp there is no reason to believe will decrease as the season advances, but it might be ameliorated by the issue of greater supplies of food. I am told that the commander-in-chief has already sought for authority to increase to a small extent the rations of the men. What may be sufficient to keep body and soul together on the coast of Syria, in the Mesopotamia valleys, and even in Stamboul itself, is not necessarily enough to keep men in health among the mountains and lofty plateaux of Armenia.

And whatever may be the virtues and excellences of the Turks, they certainly do not excel in economical cookery. To say nothing of the wasteful method of making thin unleavened flat cakes, half baked on the bottom of an iron pot turned over the fire, when they get any meat it is cut up into little pieces and boiled in fat, so that almost any stomach would turn against it in the hungriest moment. Anything more indigestible it is impossible to conceive, and if the rations were much better than they are it would be still a matter of importance to the health of the Turkish army that they should be better cooked. That a school of cookery should be now established it is too much to hope for, but in the contemplated army reforms after the war it is to be hoped the point will not be lost sight of.

It is a pity, when the Turks borrowed their drill from the French army, that they did not also borrow some of the French soldiers' skill in making palatable and nourishing messes out of even unpromising materials; for in more

senses than one is the saying of Napoleon true, than "an army marches on its belly."

ANNI, *August 5*.—Readers of poor Lever's most dashing romance "Charles O'Malley," will remember that on one occasion the immortal Mickey Free put into verse as follows a portion of his woes :—

"Bad luck to this marching, pipe-claying, and starching ;
How neat one must be to be kilt by the French."

Mick would have been in a perfect Paradise here, for we have none of the troubles that so beset him in the Peninsula. We are the dirtiest, the least starched, and the least pipe-clayed army that ever encamped. We mount guard, we eat and drink when we can get anything—mutton and water for choice, with maybe a loaf of brown or black bread—and we wait for the movement that never seems to come.

Accordingly, it was quite a relief yesterday evening, on returning from my usual ride along the front—now perhaps picking up a goose for a few piastres at one of the villages in or near our lines, anon getting hold of a few spring onions, our only salad—to find that we were going to have some theatrical entertainments at head-quarters. A fatigue party soon levelled a bit of the hillside to serve as a stage, and about six o'clock we proceeded to amuse ourselves as best we might, taking care that the Russian sentries on Kizil Tépé opposite might, if they had good, or, indeed, any glasses, see for themselves how light-heartedly we make war against the invader.

The inevitable Zaibacks came first, and appeared to please an assemblage which included all ranks, from the Mushir to the camp follower or discharged servant ; but as I had previously treated of their performance in daylight

—it is far less picturesque than by the blazing watch-fires —it may be as well to say no more about it.

A couple of Tcherkesses next followed in a dance which was said to be peculiar to their country. But hardly had the young fellows taken twenty steps than a couple of voices at my side declared that it was neither more or less than “our Magyar” national dance: while I can bear solemn witness that where it was not a jig it was a hornpipe, and where it was not a hornpipe it was a jig, while it had a mild flavour of the reel, and one or two touches familiar to the British theatre-goer at the hands, or rather, I should say, at the legs, of the sprite in a pantomime.

A species of sword-dance of a singularly uninteresting character succeeded, and after Mehemet Bey and one or two other Circassians had displayed feats of equitation, such as picking up at full speed small objects from the ground and making their horses kneel and pretend to die, the *haut monde* went to dinner, leaving the Zaibacks and some soldiers of Brigadier Mehemet’s regiment to amuse the outsiders with monotonous dances to very monotonous music.

But after dark, when the Mushir and the generals came back and were joined by Sir Arnold Kemball and Lieut. Dougall, R.N., A.D.C., a play was begun in three acts, or at least three scenes, which had for its motive something between the story of the rape of the Sabines and the familiar border legend of Young Lochinvar. There was a terrible scene of a seizure by a wild band of Bashi-Bazouks, who bore off the lady in triumph, but ultimately had to submit to a counter rescue. There was a comic old woman, and a good many miscellaneous characters in the piece, which was noisy, and was not funny—which, in fact, in comparison with the farce on the previous occasion, was a

dead failure. Nobody was sorry when the Mushir, rising at half-past ten, put an end to the play, which was followed until midnight by dances and the music of Chefket Pacha's battalion band.

While we were amusing ourselves, the Russians on our right were busy enough. They had heard, without doubt, of the approach, after undue delay, of the big guns spoken of as being brought out of Kars, and rightly surmising, or being informed of their purpose, had anticipated the fire of Hussein Bey's great pieces by removing their camp to the other side of the Arpa river, that is to say, to the Russian territory. But though the enemy chose nightfall to begin his flitting, news was speedily brought to the Mushir, and without leaving his place in the circle round the temporary *al fresco* stage, he gave the necessary orders, which were promptly carried out by the cavalry on the right under Ali, Mustapha, and Edhem Pachas.

This morning there was not a vestige of the extreme left of the Russian army on Turkish territory, and our cavalry were scouring the site of the late camp of the foe. At first it was thought that the Russians had gone back to Kizil Tépé, having repented of their extension of the line ; and some of them did thus return, but the bulk of the brigade of infantry and the brigade of cavalry were later in the morning found a few miles farther to the south than their late "location," if that dreadful Americanism may, for once, be permitted me. It is not judged improbable that the new camp may be meant as a link between some forces of Tergukasoff attempting a junction with Melikoff and the two camps that have faced us so long.

Our cavalry were not idle in the change of position, but the practical result was two prisoners—this being again open to the doubt suggested by their own explanation that

they are deserters. At first we thought we had taken a lot of the baggage train of the enemy—empty it was true—but the prize was found to be simply arabas of the peasants on the Turkish banks of the Arpa, which had been requisitioned by the Russians. I telegraphed to England that we were to advance, and my authority for that statement was no less a personage than a general of division, while the telegram itself was “passed” by the Mushir; but up till this moment, and it is late, the intention has not been carried out.

August 6.—I may now tell you of a curious fact that influenced very considerably the latter portion of the campaign. On or about the 17th of June, the Mushir, unwilling that the right should be held by a mere brigade, and having nobody else to send, despatched Reis Ahmed Pacha, ferik, to take the command, giving him specific instructions to choose a good position of defence, and to telegraph when he had done so full particulars about the terrain and its capabilities. After two days—and Reis Ahmed ought to have covered the distance in six or seven hours—the Mushir became gravely discomposed at the absence of news from the right. The best men have a few superstitions, and it may be pardoned Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha if he allowed the belief to prey on him that some evil was impending.

On the 19th, at midday, the Olti force having fallen back on Sevin by reason of having no enemy in their front, Brigadier Chahin Pacha was sent from head-quarters with nine battalions as a reinforcement to Reis Ahmed. As late as five o'clock that evening, as I can testify—and Captains MacCalmont and Trotter may bear witness to the same effect—the Mushir had no notion of leaving Sevin; but in one moment, meditating on the circumstances of

the case, he came to the conclusion that whatever might be the calls on him at head-quarters, duty required him at Delibaba. Nor was this resolve changed by a feeble telegram from Achmet Pacha, announcing his arrival, and giving no particulars whatever of the terrain or the condition of affairs. How he passed me as I was getting up in the grey of the dawn at Khorassan, how I missed the battle of Helias by being obliged to go into Erzeroum through the misconduct of a servant, I have already said. But no sooner was the Mushir at Delibaba, than he found the Russians were some distance up the pass, and went in search of them. The result was that, taking up his position at Helias, or Elias, he gave the enemy battle, and inflicted upon them the first defeat of the war.

Although in our natural impatience for action, we are disposed to find fault with the Mushir for present inactivity, it must be remembered that he is not his own master in all respects. I have hinted more than once at restraints imposed upon him, and I may now say frankly, that if he had his own way our army would be in Russia this evening, leaving to Mustapha or Hussein Hami Pacha the responsibility, with Kars at his back, of keeping the enemy from another raid to the westward. But timid counsels still prevail at Stamboul, and Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha, one of the most rising men in Turkey, is known by the court cliques to be ardently in favour of the Constitution, and of military and administrative reform. Consequently there is, even now that Redif Pacha has gone, a disposition to restrain him from any enterprise which would make him too prominent, the fear being, apparently, lest the conqueror of Yemen also should prove the successful invader of Russia, and thus become the pet of the Ottoman people, as he is, beyond doubt, the idol of his army.

CHAPTER XIII.

ALAGSDAGH, *August 9.*—At daybreak yesterday morning we had a fine sensation—no less than a Russian cannonade along nearly the whole line. There was at first a great deal of difficulty in finding out what all the distant thunder was about, but as the haze lifted from the plain—and that same miasmatic haze is only one among a dozen good reasons why the Mushir as yet prefers the colder and more exposed, but on the whole healthier, hills—we could see a few of our irregular cavalry hovering about the enemy's outposts, and apparently rousing at once their wrath and their suspicions. For a while their fire averaged about one shot every five minutes, then it slackened, because the gunners found the cavalry did not eat them up, and because certain battalions of infantry came to their support against the terrible Koords or Tcherkesses who were scouring the plain a couple of thousand yards off, or even more.

I think that I shall exaggerate if I put the Turkish force which caused all this disturbance as high as 150 men; certainly there were not 250. But if there had been 25,000, the Russians could not have shown greater perturbation, for they were alive all the way from their right on the Alexandropol road to the ruins of Anni, to which they returned in the course of the morning, seemingly not finding their own side of the river to their liking. So alarmed were they, apparently, that they pushed forward seven or eight battalions and a couple of batteries, with many de-

tached squadrons of cavalry, as far on their right centre as the ravine by the village of Subatan, where they rested nearly the livelong day. On their left centre they manned the heights of Kizil Tépé, which are covered with entrenchments, and sent out several battalions to the south of that virtual fortress, as well as two batteries. And up till about eight o'clock this was all that happened. Then our out-posts near Subatan were strengthened by one or two battalions, and a lot of the Tcherkesses went out to see the fun. So did I, but there was none to be met with, and as my reward for a long ride I had nothing but the contrast, brought out very sharply indeed, between the science of war and the arts of peace.

On the one side and the other Krupp cannon and Martini-Peabody or Berdan rifles ; between them that ancient winnowing machine, rude Boreas, was separating grains from husk while the oxen were treading out the corn unmuzzled on threshing-floors of plain earth, and the grain, when cleaned, was being stored in those primitive granaries, holes in the ground. The straw was being removed from the field on bullock carts, such as that belonging to the waggoner who called on Jupiter to lend him a lift ; and at the same time rifled guns were being moved at speed from one point to another by the aid of the fleetest horses.

And this is the way that swords are being turned into ploughshares and spears into pruning-hooks in these primitive parts, where all in agriculture seems to rest virtually unchanged, since about the time that Noah descended from cloud-capped Ararat, or Aladagh. Finding that nothing was to be seen, I went back early in the afternoon to headquarters, where I learnt that a company of infantry had been engaged at long range for a few minutes with the Russians in the neighbourhood of Subatan, one man being

shot through the abdomen, and two others wounded in the hand. The Russian artillery fire continued until sunset at longer or shorter intervals, and at least a hundred shells must have been discharged at our men during the day, with what judgment and discretion is pretty apparent from the fact that there was nobody killed, and not one wound from shell or shot has been treated by any medical man in Kars, or in this camp! Even the "wooden spoons" in a Shoeburyness competition would do better than this, for more than once the range was not above 1,500 yards.

About five o'clock the enemy's battalions, which had been uselessly kept all day near Subatan, were allowed to return to camp, and here I must say that if the Russian artillerymen cannot shoot the Russian linesmen can manœuvre. I never saw anything prettier in my life than the way in which the battalions and squadrons retired in *échelon*. The distances were simply perfect, and the battalions moved less like human beings than black plaques actuated by concealed machinery. Seen against the hill-side rising from the ravine on the Subatan river, this manœuvre was witnessed by our whole force, and may have moved to envy some men in an army no regiment of which could have done as well in this respect to save the issue of a campaign.

During the afternoon a letter was received from the Russian head-quarters involving a nice point. The head-quarter staff asked for the release of one Antoine Guetkoff, "a member of the Red Cross Society," who was represented to have been taken prisoner by our cavalry while actually engaged in the benevolent enterprise of carrying succour to a wounded man. As he has not been sent back, and as the Russian capacity for making mountains out of mole-hills seems to be as great as ever, it may

not be amiss to say why the request of the *état major* of messieurs the enemy has not been complied with. In the first place, after a strict search in Kars, nobody answering to the name or description could be found ; and secondly, no Red Cross man has been taken prisoner by the Ottomans in this part of the empire ; while, thirdly, the register shows that a man identified as Antoine Guetkoff by papers in his pocket was found killed in open fight at Sevin, and buried decently with a number of other Russians after that memorable struggle. It is rather a pity that the Russians should be so unfortunate in their applications to us.

It is rumoured that the Grand Duke Michael has a new chief of the staff, and if he knows something of the great world he may incline to treat the few newspaper correspondents who accompany his troops with greater consideration. We hear queer things of the indignities that are put upon them, and of the rigid discipline in which they are kept, as well as the way in which they have their information supplied to them. And the stories that are told us make the correspondents here—only four in number, as it happens, but that is no fault of the Turkish authorities—more than content with their lot.

Never were representatives of the Fourth Estate, in the history of the newspaper press, treated with greater distinction and consideration than Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha extends to us. We are absolutely unfettered, and the Mushir, when one member of the little group did something which excited the ire of the Constantinopolitan officials, actually interposed his authority to shield the offender. Yesterday evening, for example, I had an hour's chat with his excellency, *de omnibus rebus*, and never for one moment did his manner or words suggest

that we were on anything but terms of the most absolute equality. It is the same with my *confrères*. Save when he is occupied with the chiefs of his staff, he is always glad to see those whom he believes he can trust, and he evidently desires that the correspondents shall write entirely at their ease, so far as any influence that he might bring to bear is concerned. Despite severe trials from climate and exposure, the correspondents of the English press should bear away with them, when they do go, many pleasant memories of this campaign—of friendships formed, of kindnesses manifested, and that in a marked degree, by General Sir Arnold Kemball, Mushir Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha, and the chiefs of his staff without exception.

We are absolutely without news for a week from Bayazid and that quarter, and indeed our news from any quarter is very vague. From the "frosty Caucasus," whose tops we can dimly discern, we hear of Tcherkesses cutting Russian communications, but we are pretty well used to that sort of thing by this time ; and I dare say any English paper knows more of even the Batoum movements than our whole camp put together.

With reference to the sentence passed upon the Koord peasants who disinterred the Russian dead near Helias, the Mushir informs me that the penalty has been commuted to eighteen months' penal servitude in a fortress, and he hopes this will be sufficient to teach these barbarians and their kin a lesson on the respect due to "the dead who died for glory."

August 18.—Russian generals are rather fond of counting their chickens, not only before they are hatched, but before the eggs are laid. Thousands of people in England yet remember how on one September day, three-and-twenty years ago, the Russian officers put up a grand-stand for

their lady friends, to let them see how they would thrash the English and French forces out of hand at the Alma ; but somehow the thrashing was the other way. The like overweening vanity—one of the chief characteristics of the Muscovite “swell” of to-day in public as in private life—led the Russians yesterday morning to strike nearly all the tents of their central camp at Kizil Tépé, with the view of erecting them in the course of the afternoon upon a position on our left, which three weeks ago to-day they had already failed to take. That Melikoff had so failed, however, was no reason the Grand Duke should not succeed,—at least so His Highness appears to have thought ; and he proceeded to essay the task in the most confident, and, if I may be allowed the expression, childlike manner. His dispositions would have done credit to a lad of sixteen in a first attempt to play at kriegspiel ; but whether considered as part of the strategy of the campaign, or merely looked at as the tactics of the day, they were of the most elementary nature, and could have deceived no one.

All day yesterday it was quite evident something was on the cards. At daybreak we saw that the camp at Anni had been again broken up, and that the brigade and regiment of cavalry composing it had been removed some five or six miles along the Arpa to the north-east, out of harm's way, in case anything might happen. Sundry other shiftings of position in the camps, and certain musters of troops at unusual hours of the afternoon, gave token that the new general had got some notion in his head, and that it behoved us to be on the “look out for squalls.”

The sequel will show that we were not unprepared ; indeed, since we have been in this position, we have not been for one moment unprepared. But it is not going too far to say that Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha knew what was

going to happen almost as well as Melikoff himself; and as a proof of this allow me to say that some days since, being tired of this inaction, I consulted the Mushir about the expediency of taking a trip towards Ismail Pacha's division "on Sunday," and his excellency, with a meaning smile, advised me to wait till Sunday came, as by that time I might have found something to fill up my leisure.

But apart from the Mushir's excellent information, it needed no soldier's eye to tell that the enemy were preparing a *coup*, and when this morning broke, and the tents behind Kizil Tépé were down, one knew pretty well where to look for the columns belonging to all the camps. But before it was possible to see the columns our outposts felt them, and it was evident that the Russians, as they formed up in the dark, were in very loose order, for our scouts brought in several of them as prisoners, including one who, being a native and a resident of Begli Ahmed, on Turkish territory, and having chosen to serve as a Cossack in the Russian ranks, will to-morrow morning find himself "hanged by the neck" as a foul traitor.

But there was no sign of disorder in the enemy's columns when at length we did see them. They were not yet in position, but they were "working up," and for a while the strong glare of the morning sun, combined with the mists of the plain below us, prevented us from seeing whether they were doing anything, and if so what, to the south and south-east. But here they did nothing all day, and the fact is a little surprising, for there is no part of our position so pregnable as that which, being strongest by nature, has been left almost untouched by military art. I would not, however, be understood to say that it is pregnable at all, and perhaps the invaders have arrived at this conclusion from a prolonged and close study of it at Anni.

At six o'clock the enemy's intentions were so far undeveloped that the bulk of our men were allowed time to comfortably finish their breakfasts, and they had need of such support before the day was over. It was not till half-past seven that the head-quarters' bugle summoned the reserve troops to the front, and they responded to the summons with alacrity, cheering heartily as they passed down or along the terraces to their posts.

The first of the enemy to approach our positions were those on the extreme right of the Russian line, and here for a long time only four battalions or regiments of cavalry showed themselves. The rest were hid so artfully that nobody could see them, except those who had glasses. This triumph of tactical skill ought to have taken in the unspeakable Turk; but it did not, for every part of the plain can be seen from one part or another of our positions, and barbarians though the Ottomans necessarily are, yet they have a telegraph wire running through their lines, and actually can make use of it, as they did to-day to some purpose.

So Melikoff's little scheme did not work. We saw as plainly as though he had sent to tell us, that there were not merely four battalions, but a whole division on our left front, and we could see also that "the usual two battalions at Subatan" on our centre front were on this occasion increased to eighteen, while on the Russian left, that is on our right centre, there was little save artillery. From first to last during the day the enemy brought into action fourteen batteries, or 112 guns, and they may have had more, but we identified fourteen "speaking," gun by gun. I will not pretend to say how many battalions or brigades there were in the field on the side of the enemy, but their numbers, as shown during the day, were put down by various high

authorities as 35,000 men. To meet these we had about 28,000 men in line, and about 12,000 were under or near fire during the day.

The simple-mindedness of the Russian plan was manifested as soon as deadly operations began. It was upon our right that the Muscovite artillery first opened. This was about eight o'clock, or perhaps a few minutes earlier, as one can never be quite certain of exact time in a camp like this, where watches vary at will, recognising no common centre of authority to which they should defer. Between Utch Tépé and the flat-topped rock of which I have before spoken on our right centre, we had a few score skirmishers of the Tcherkess and Koord type, and on these very isolated combatants the Russian artillery poured a fire heavy enough to have breached a fortress. Naturally, the irregular cavalry did not see its way to holding its ground, and I do not blame the men for this once.

The fire may probably have been as wild as Russian artillery practice in these parts frequently is; but against scattered horse wild fire is frequently as effective as the best. When the guns had cleared their front, they were manœuvred on by independent batteries, there being no fewer than three holding forth on this section, and the few battalions of troops supporting them—if support it could be called—being at a distance of several versts. We had only one battery advanced in this quarter, near the village of Yah-nalik, and the reply of its six guns was feeble indeed, in comparison with the attack of the Russian twenty-four of heavier metal; so it withdrew towards our lines, and took up a position to the right of the flat-topped rock.

To the left of that hill there are several small ravines running from the mountains behind us across our position

and out into the plain, and here it was thought advisable to keep four of our battalions in case of the enemy's fire forcing the evacuation of the rock, which is in shape a truncated cone. But these battalions were sheltered by the nature of the ground, and I am doubtful whether the enemy knew they were there. At any rate they remained undisturbed until the evening.

When the Russian batteries came within range, they opened fire on the top of the rock, and the three Krupp guns here, having the advantage of position, which more than compensated for the enemy's possession of a great target, soon replied and proved themselves quite a match for the three batteries of eight guns opposed to them. Worse practice than that of the Muscov gunners it is not given to the mind of man to imagine. It was only by an exception that now and again one of the shells even struck the parapet of loose stones which had been thrown up round the top of the rock by some previous occupants of the ground—it may be as long ago as the age when Anni flourished as an Armenian city.

And this primitive breast-work answered its purpose very well. It was thick enough to stand the shock of very occasional sixteen-pounder shells, and it was high enough, save where it was broken down to allow of the play of our guns, to keep the enemy's projectiles from bursting within its irregular circle. Indeed, I doubt if two dozen so burst in six hours' continual attempts to plant them there. On the contrary, the missiles form this evening veritable *débris* in every direction around the rock, and some of them lie in such places that it taxes ingenuity to imagine how they got there. I have dealt thus long on the practice of the first of the enemy's batteries, because their faults were characteristic of all the practice from the other side, with very few exceptions.

At a quarter past eight the great column of the enemy began to progress seriously towards the larger hill of Yahni on our left—a hill which, I think, I have before described as being like a mansard or French roof—and almost simultaneously the second column pressed forward to the village of Subatan, three miles from our centre. Here we had only two battalions, the position being more effective for attack than for defence, as it is far advanced, and high though parts of it stand, it can readily be turned.

However, our fellows belonging to Chefket Pacha's division on our left centre held on to both village and crag until the enemy four times their number attempted to surround them and charge from three sides at once with the bayonet. That shock our men did not wait to meet, but falling back in good order rallied behind a small redoubt, from which half a battery had been trying more to damage the enemy than to hold the Russians in check. Hence they withdrew in open order across a piece of singularly level ground to the foot of our lines proper, and hither the enemy did not think fit to follow them, or even to advance within two miles thereof. In fact, the whole proceeding was a childish feint, attempted in the hope of withdrawing our attention from the left.

But before I leave this part of the field I am sorry to have to record two acts of wanton brutality on the part of the enemy. The village of Subatan is Mussulman, and, as I have had frequent opportunities of noting, its women observe more tenaciously than most others on the frontier the strictest retirement. Naturally enough they had shut to their doors and hidden themselves away, as much to escape accidents as to shun observation. But the gallant warriors of the Czar forced the doors, and in one case where the terrified inmates refused to open, they were fired upon.

A man and a fine young girl were thus killed on the spot, and by way of punishing the women for resistance to the will of the soldiery, ten of the principal men of the village were sent to the rear as prisoners. I must, however, do the superior authorities of the enemy's camp the justice to say that no sooner had the men arrived there than they were sent home again ; but this evening, in that sad house, in this poor village, lies the blood-stained corpse of that poor girl, whose lot it was to furnish another illustration of the progress of Russian civilization.

Further, in the most wanton way the enemy threw a number of shells into the village of Kerchané, which contained no Turkish troops, near which there were no Turkish troops, and which was most unlikely to contain any Turkish troops, for it lies among rocks through which troops could not escape if they were there attacked. Happily, however, the benevolent intentions of the civilisers failed, and every one of the shells expended its force on the ground instead of descending on the heads of the poor villagers through the earthen roofs of the hovels into which they were crowded, crouching and trembling at the approach of the rescuing army, of whose doings they already knew too much.

I have deliberately exhausted for the present the features of the fight on our centre and right, if fight it can be called, in order that the narrative of the real struggle on the left may not be interrupted. And now we must go back an hour or two. The strong Russian column which we left advancing on the Yahni hills continued its progress in beautiful order. Indeed, the same may be said of the troops at Subatan, and of all the Russian forces that I have seen in Asia ; they can at least manœuvre admirably, but I have yet to see them fight as well as they "work." We have

been so long accustomed to hear of the obstinate manner in which Russian soldiers disputed the ground many a time and oft in front of Sebastopol against the best regiments of England and France, that one naturally looks for something like pluck in the behaviour of a Russian column. But either they have been much overrated, or the Muscovite forces in Asia—far smaller men in physique than is generally supposed—are the offscourings of the Czar's army, or the men have not their heart in the work. Their attack is resolute until they open out under fire, and then they at once waver unless they are fully two to one, and have an equality or superiority of ground.

However, as I have said, they went along in splendid order so long as they were in close or even open column; but as they began to get within range of the Turkish small arms, they having already felt that the Ottoman guns, if smaller than their own, are at least as well served, they necessarily took open order, and from that moment the battle was ours.

The Turks held large and small rifle-pits on the almost scarp'd side of the very steep hill, and they were écheloned on a slight spur which divides the mountain into two unequal sections. From the fire of the latter troops the enemy could shelter themselves in the long grass through which they approached, or in the sparse yellow corn that is languishing for the sickle, and is now in many places stained with the heart's blood of the "sons of the Czar." But from the deadly rifle-pits above nothing could protect them. And yet their officers must have known of these.

The hill was not until to-day habitually occupied by the Ottoman troops, it is true, because there is no water within easy reach, and because it is too far in advance of

the lines of Hussein Hami Pacha, to whose Kars division, reinforced by but one brigade from our right, fell the honour of the day; but for weeks past the dark lines of the trenches on its face have stood out plainly enough for all to see, and it was poor soldiering to take men against a hill that was no use to the invaders. However, when they were there they might at least have fought well. This they did not do. Their fire was in no respect well sustained, and if they had not been supported by several batteries they would have been crushed in ten minutes. But the fire of their guns below, pitching common shell and shrapnel up to the hill-side, kept the Ottoman battalions from leaving their spur. Moreover, a diversion was tried.

To the north of Yahni the Greater stands a hill called Yahni the Less, and this was also crowned by Turkish troops, as was a ridge connecting both with the camps behind. In order to draw off the fire from the column attacking the greater hill on the south side, a large body of cavalry with a light battery and one or two Russian battalions were sent round towards Kars, and on these at half-past ten a Turkish battery opened. But, in spite of the battery, they got within range of the Ottoman battalions on the north, and then ensued some of the finest breech-loader firing I have ever heard—I cannot say seen, for the ridge was between me and it. The damage done was not in proportion to the steadiness of the reports, and I can only conclude that the distance of the Cossacks and Russian dragoons was an extreme one for any troops that do not know how to use a rifle with real skill. This diversion, however, did not last long, but during its continuance the main Russian column obtained a fair lodgment on the slope simply by dint of superior numbers. And when once lodged there at least their right flank was protected against

the pits, but on the other hand it was exposed to the shell fire of the Turkish artillery, two batteries of which were well placed on a slope by a ravine, which may be said to form the boundary between the division of Chetket Pacha and that of Hussein Hami Pacha. Still, shell fire is ineffective against troops in very open order, and the Russian right ought to have made its way up to the pits, as English troops, if they had ever been taken there at all, certainly would have done. But in modern warfare the individual effort of the soldier counts for much ; and here there was no individual effort to speak of. The men appeared to obey the word of command, but as for effort beyond that they did not—in the language of the turf—"try an ounce."

On the other hand, the men in the Ottoman ranks appeared to work as if all depended upon each, and if they had only known how to shoot, in the British sense of the term, hardly a Muscov would have left the hill-side alive. As it was, nothing but the efforts of the Russian company officers kept their men up to the scratch ; and finally, after about an hour of actual possession of a portion of the hill, the two brigades on whom had fallen the brunt of the work began to retire piecemeal, and soon in a body, picking up and carrying off their dead and wounded so far as they could.

They had made their way along about half of the south side of the mountain on the midst of the slope, and along three-fourths of it lower down, and what the result would have been if two or three other brigades of fresh troops had been brought up it is happily unnecessary to conjecture ; but it does seem to me that the officer commanding the division was very remiss in his duty, or that the brigadiers actually in action have grave cause of complaint against those of the same rank who should have

backed them up, but who contented themselves with trying to avoid shell fire in the open beyond.

As soon as the Russian brigades were re-formed they appeared to at once resume the steadiness that in open order had been so conspicuous by its absence, and, being threatened by the Circassians on one side, they divided to allow the passage of a body of Cossacks, who, after some little manœuvring for position, charged our irregulars. Of course I was not in this fight, and so I cannot describe those individual feats which lend all their interest to details of encounters of this kind. But, induced by a little firing from our infantry, the Cossacks, who had become almost inextricably mixed up with the Tcherkesses, began to draw away after their main body, and by one o'clock they were off, not only the hill, but the slope leading to it, on which, not on the mountain side itself, as I have heard said, the cavalry struggle took place.

As the enemy drew off I followed the front line of our skirmishers who took their places. Considering how heavy the firing had been for nearly two hours, and less heavily for two more, I expected to find the ground literally strewn with wounded and dead. But, although at one place the Turkish dead were pretty thick, there were comparatively few seriously wounded men, and I did not find more than a score or so beyond the one place where they had remained so steadily just behind and on the spur!

In rear of this the ground was badly ploughed up by the Russian shells, especially in one little patch of flax—brown with neglect, and now all but useless for the scutcher—as if the artillery fire of the enemy had been throughout over the heads of our men; and of the dead I only distinguished two as having fallen from shell fire. The Russian dead were already being rapidly stripped to the skin when

I got to the ground, and this, I am sorry to say, not only by Koords, but by Circassians and by one or two of our regular infantry; though in no case did I witness a mutilation such as I had to reprobate in describing the previous fight on this hill three weeks since, or, indeed, any mutilation at all, save such as arose in fair fight, though I have since heard that one head had been cut off.

Making my way to the far side of the mountain slowly, I met Reschid Bey going out with his irregular cavalry to harass the rear of the retiring enemy, and as this colonel is an old acquaintance, I easily obtained permission to accompany him. When we got clear of the hill the Russians had already got over the nearest ridge of the rolling plain, and we followed them pretty quickly, our gallant Tcherkesses and Koords trusting to their Winchesters at ranges that would have tried the powers of a Henry or a Metford, rather than closing with the Cossacks of the rear-guard.

However, we must have annoyed the Russian rear considerably, for two or three times their column stopped and faced about. All this time we had no batteries within easy range of the enemy, though our gunners from behind us were playing at long bowls. The third time the Russian rear-guard halted and turned they disclosed a couple of guns. One shell fell right in front, about three hundred yards short. Almost simultaneously a heavy one burst abreast of me at a distance of not more than thirty yards. Shall I be forgiven if I confess that I began to doubt whether I had not urgent duties calling me back to the staff?

Both on the slower way out, and in my more rapid "strategic movement to the rear," I saw plenty of evidence that the Russians had, as well in their advance as in their retirement, suffered more heavily when they were

in column than they will probably be prepared to admit. In the morning I had noticed in the rear of Subatan several well-horsed ambulances, and I am told that a number of these accompanied the right wing of the Russian army also. We have no such thing; our ambulance is a spare horse or a bullock wagon, notwithstanding all the money that seems to have been subscribed in England for the purpose. Anyhow, the enemy not only has them, but knows how to use them.

Beyond a certain line not a dead or wounded man was left, and yet traces of both dead and wounded were abundant. I suppose that must be a dead man whose thigh-bone was torn out of the socket by a shell, and that man is hardly alive who left a third of his brains inside his uniform cap; it is perhaps doubtful whether the loss of an arm close to the shoulder would be fatal on the field, but there cannot be much doubt about the man, the bulk of whose jawbone lay in the black marsh where it is crossed by the road leading along the valley between Subatan and Kars. All praise to the Russians for taking so much pains; but I call attention to the fact, lest it should be supposed the number of the enemy's dead found upon the field is any criterion of the serious nature of this battle.

As I was giving my horse a bit of food and a rest near two batteries which kept up a distant play upon the retreating columns, but should have followed them up within half the range in order to do much harm, I met General Sir Arnold Kemball and his aide-de-camp, Lieut. M. Dougall, R.N., who had been observing the struggle from the positions of the left batteries, and who were now on their way across the plain to Subatan, from which the enemy had begun to retire as early as two o'clock.

One word exactly fits the situation here. The Russian

retreat to-day was sullen, such a retreat as one of the big dogs in these villages beats when he is set on in a strange quarter by two or three curs as big as himself; a retirement with a decided inclination every now and then to turn and bite. Still, there was no help for it, since no sooner all along our main line was a Russian battalion or battery on the move than a Turkish force took its place. It was not a pursuit in the strict sense of the word, and yet we followed the enemy up to within two thousand yards of the guns of his entrenched camp, whose front is Kizil Tépé, and we did not draw off our forces until the sun was within eight or ten degrees of the horizon. Sir Arnold Kemball, who had kindly asked me to accompany him across the plain, can bear witness to the conduct of the Russians in Subatan and Kerchané, and I have no doubt, though I do not know, that he will also bear me out in an expression of admiration at the *tenue* of the Turkish troops who were actually under fire—always excepting those thorough curs, our irregular cavalry.

The last of the fighting was between one of the battalions of Redschild Pacha's division and one of the Russian battalions which had been in the rear of their batteries on our right all day, and had been a little tardy in returning to camp. But it was no great affair, and I do not suppose anybody was hurt on either side in the twenty minutes or so that these bodies exchanged compliments, or that the retiring Russians were pounded at by a couple of our guns at a distance of about a mile, for half the enemy were in skirmishing order, and the rest moved to their camp in very open column of companies, with their left flank towards us.

I have already said that this fight cannot be gauged by the "butcher's bill." That on our side was one hundred and

forty killed and three hundred and eighty-two wounded more or less seriously—I should not have thought it was so many; and on the other side we have no means of knowing anything further than that we have buried two hundred and seventy bodies of Russians, seventy of these being killed during the retreat from our centre and right. Over two hundred fourgons of dead and wounded were counted going into the Russian camp. The day has thus shown to the enemy that with his present force he cannot take or turn our positions, and that any movement to either flank leaves Gumri, if not Tiflis, at our mercy. Wherefore, if he is wise, he will stay where he is until the time comes for winter quarters.

August 20.—If Melikoff was late at work on Saturday morning, he was early enough to-day, for he had a strong column of cavalry with a battery of guns engaged with our outposts at Subatan at four o'clock this morning. Originally, it would seem, this was meant to be the prelude to another attack, but according to our information the main columns were countermanded at the last moment, and the cavalry, finding they were unsupported, drew off at daybreak. They were just in time, for had they remained in the vicinity of Subatan another quarter of an hour they would have found their retreat cut off by a couple of brigades sent out from Chefket Pacha's division on our left centre.

As it was, perhaps the batteries along our front were the means of saving the enemy, for they opened fire as soon as it was possible to see, and so gave warning to the Russian cavalry that we were more than prepared for their arrival, and were indeed not unwilling to see them a little closer. When the day fairly broke there was no main body of the enemy visible on any part

of the plain, and the cavalry were going back at speed to their quarters. So our whole force, which had been specially warned overnight, returned to their tents, having suffered no worse evil than a temporary loss of sleep.

August 22.—Riding out this afternoon with a patrol of the Mushir's cavalry body-guard, and making for Subatan, the approach of a column of Russian dragoons with three guns prevented me from reaching my destination, and so we stopped short at the village of Hadji Veli, and there I learnt of an atrocity which puts that at Subatan into the shade. Hadji Veli stands on the same ravine as its sister village, but is nearer to our lines by perhaps a mile. It is in ordinary times evidently a place of some prosperity, and it has houses built with a regard to neatness, and even with a certain pretentiousness that are very rare indeed in this locality. But the ruthless finger of frontier war has been laid on it in an unmistakable way. Dozens of houses have been pulled to pieces for their timber, and the few families which have clung to their homes have parted with their flocks and herds, save a few scattered bullocks used for arabas that have nothing to transport.

On Saturday a regiment of Russian dragoons—I wish I could have found out its number and name—penetrated to this point, and one of the female inhabitants, rushing into the other extreme from that adopted in Subatan, entered into familiar conversation with some of the soldiers so far as their powers of speech admitted of communication. After a while she ventured to say something which one of the dragoons considered blameworthy, and so drawing a pistol he shot her on the spot three several times in the presence of an officer who looked on and, according to the testimony of the villagers, betrayed by neither look nor word any disapproval of the murderous act.

The body of the poor creature, who was about forty-five years of age, lay where life had been taken from it until late in the evening, and was only buried to-day, so that hundreds can testify to the fact of the death from a bullet wound, as dozens of independent witnesses saw the foul deed performed on the bank of the precipitous ravine on which stands the hovel that the poor woman and her children had tenanted, and that now is deserted ; for the neighbours have taken charge of the youngsters until some place can be found for them.

No wonder that, hearing of such doings, there should be during the last three days, now that the harvest has been partly secured, a very general emigration from the more outlying villages of the plain towards those that are at least within the Turkish lines. Thus the half-deserted villages of Kilissa and Vezinkeui are to-day being peopled by throngs of peasants with arabas laden with bedclothes and scanty articles of their household furniture—if that be the word for a collection of items among which is not one single chair, table, or bedstead, since the use of either is entirely unknown in the district. The Turks may be very bad, but at least they have taken measures to protect the property of the peasants where they have crossed the Russian frontier ; and nothing can exceed the concern of the Mushir that his army should be free from the stain of such atrocious acts as can, it seems, be performed with impunity under the eyes, if not with the approval, of Melikoff's officers.

Yesterday we had a Russian *parlementaire* with the white flag sent to our lines. To-day we have returned the compliment ; and I can say that the Russian officer who came here was in anything but high spirits respecting the progress of his master's arms either in Europe or Asia, and he made no secret of the opinion that Turkey had proved a

much harder nut to crack than anybody had dreamt of. "We may not," he said, "see the end of the war even next year." He was hospitably treated among us, and perhaps he gathered enough during his stay here to convince his commander-in-chief that on this side at least we are not a bit disheartened by anything that has for so far befallen the Turkish cause.

A fine series of sketches of the battle of Saturday last and some of its incidents, as well as of the camp here generally, has been prepared for the *Illustrated London News* by Mr. Joseph Bell, one of its youngest and best artists, and in the columns of the great pictorial journal they will convey to thousands of readers far better ideas of our position and our mode of life here than yards of letter-press description could possibly do. I may add that both at Kars and here Mr. Bell has received from the commanding and staff officers the utmost facilities. They declare that they have nothing to conceal; that they are especially desirous Englishmen should know them as they are; and that whatever may be the line of abstention adopted by the Government, the great bulk of the British people should sympathise with them in their energetic action against the Russian invader.

I have already done justice to the attitude of the Turkish generals to the representatives of the English daily press, and it is a pleasure to find that not even in respect of the works of defence do their excellencies attempt to prevent the fullest information, without a suspicion of censorship, being afforded by pencil as by pen to the English public.

For two days we have had bitterly cold weather and deluges of rain, this time unaccompanied by thunderstorms. It is yet, I suppose, sultry in England, but here the mountains are beginning to increase or receive their winter coatings of snow. Another month—according to

some authorities, three according to others—will make field operations, even on the plain below, impossible ; for that plain lies 6,000 feet above the sea level. It is true Kars in 1855 fell in November, but siege works are very different from field movements. We are ready to move on as soon as the opportunity presents itself. We could move on at once but for excess of caution at Constantinople.

August 23.—Redschid Pacha, commanding the first division, has just started for Erzeroum to arrange for the Ardahan court-martial and to stir up the sluggish authorities of the transport department. There is no news from Ismail Pacha, of whom the Mushir has not heard, except in the most trifling way, for nearly a week. At the last news the Koord Pacha was waiting for provisions and ammunition, and believed he would have little difficulty in reaching Erivan when his supplies arrived. But there is no time to be lost. The sun is up some five hours, and yet it is so cold that I have great difficulty in holding the pen. All my *confrères* who have hitherto shared with me the "tented field" have taken refuge in Kars or Erzeroum ; but hard though life under canvas is, especially when the cold weather sets in, I for one prefer it to the very lively livestock of the fortress city, the name of which in the Armenian language signifies filth ; and I must say Kars is eminently deserving of the appellation.

CHAPTER XIV.

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEAR KERCHANÉ, *August 26.*—On Friday morning there was nothing in either camp to show that any movement was in progress, and yet in ours there was a certain restlessness vaguely presaging something important. Presently it began to be whispered about that the Mushir had ordered several battalions out of Kars to our left, in such detachments that if the enemy should see them no importance would be attached to the proceedings. The first of these detachments left the fortress as early as four o'clock in the afternoon, but it was not till two o'clock yesterday morning that the last had taken to the field, and yet the battalions did not exceed 3,000 men in all.

About two o'clock on Friday, however, the usual look-out officers on the head-quarters terrace—and there never has been one of these keener sighted or more continually engaged than the Mushir himself—saw, or fancied they saw that many of the enemy's tents were being struck in the centre camp of Orta behind Kizil Tépé. In half an hour more suspicion became certainty, and before yet an hour had passed a long column of tents, baggage of all kinds, ammunition horses and wagons, and ambulances, mingled now with infantry, now with cavalry, and again with artillery, left this camp for the more northern one, situated on the road from Karso Gumri, at a village called Kuruk Déré. By five o'clock it seemed that not more than two brigades were left in the Kizil Tépé camp, and though our Tcherkesses soon found out that this was rather an under

estimate, the broad fact remained that the bulk of the Russian army had been concentrated to the northward for some purpose. We can only surmise that a blow was to be struck to cut us off from Kars, or to break our line at Yahnilar, or perhaps, leaving some three brigades in aid of the garrison at Gumri, Melikoff proposed to abandon this part of his frontier and going north to resume "the march on Erzeroum by way of Olti," which was so strangely, as it seemed at the time, and we now know so necessarily, discontinued a couple of months ago. Whatever Melikoff meant, Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha, being indeed entirely indifferent for the moment to any Russian plans, swiftly formed and matured a plan of his own.

Very, very patiently—to many it seemed apathetically—had he waited for his chance, and if it did not come in precisely the way that he and others had looked for it, the opening was perhaps all the better on that account. He summoned around him his generals and the colonels in command of brigades. I have it from one of them, and he by no means the junior in rank or age, that the commander-in-chief did not ask their opinions, or even suggest that their advice would be welcome. On the contrary, he and his quiet chief of the staff, Hassan Pacha, had everything cut and dried, and the generals accordingly simply received their orders. Indeed, they were not all present together.

Redschid Pacha has gone from here, as Mushir Mustapha Pacha and Faizy Pacha have gone from Kars to Erzeroum, to sit as members of a court-martial on the general who lost Ardahan, and his place has been temporarily taken by Hashin Pacha, who therefore commanded on our right. Ali Pacha was to lead the right centre with an object. Mehemet Ghazi, otherwise Ferik Schamyl, was to

be on the left centre—where Chefket Pacha commands—with his irregulars, and Moussa Pacha another Circassian general, was at the head of our left, while Hussein Hami Pacha, with the Kars troops, was to act in co-operation on the extreme left.

So far there was no great departure from routine ; nor can it be deemed an innovation that the Mushir should have entrusted to his able chief of the staff a general supervision over the left half of our line, such as he proposed for himself on the right. I do not know that there was any other departure from previous arrangements than the postponement of one of the “camp fires” which had been fixed for Friday night, and which I have previously described, for it was in accordance with recent usage that the men should have their breakfasts served out to them, and even partly cooked over night.

Perhaps the camps were quiet half an hour earlier than usual, but certainly this did not apply to the headquarters' camp, where, although on the Thursday night many had stopped up to look at the eclipse, some of the aides-de-camp themselves had so little notion of what was on the cards, that, like genial souls as they are, they sat and gossipped and discussed the mild cigarette with or without accompaniments until “the noon of night” had almost come.

At midnight, a force of two brigades stole out quietly from our right and right centre to the village of Kerchané, and with this force went Ali Pacha and Hashin Pacha. There is another village named Yahnalik, somewhere nearer to the objective point of the expedition, but it is more exposed to the observation of the enemy. In and around Kerchané, which is situated at the foot of our centre, and actually on the plain, the men contrived to

obtain a brief renewal of the sleep which had been interrupted, and which, alas! too many of them were now to enjoy for the last time before the great sleep. Somewhat later, but still in plenty of time before the dawn, the rest of our line was awake, and at its allotted posts. It was the morning of the anniversary of the Sultan's birth, and in the course of the day a royal salute was to have been fired in camp in honour of the day; but the powder was otherwise spent, and that, on the whole, in a manner more satisfactory to his Majesty.

At three o'clock Ali Pacha left Kerchané, and struck as quietly as the men could march across the flat part of the plain, now through fields of corn almost past reaping, again through meadows watered by tiny rivulets, anon across hard stubble, and occasionally over a bit of broken ground studded with stones, but mainly by a path which leads from Kerchané to Orta, and which is much used by the peasants in ordinary times, so that it is a fair and well-beaten road. The pace was good, and the column had covered the best part of two miles within half an hour, strangely enough without meeting with any of the enemy's scouts, though more than one of our own was with difficulty prevented from giving an alarm.

Whether long immunity had given the Russians a conviction that we should not attack them, or whether their scouts neglected their appointed work, as the cavalry "muff" theirs in many other respects, I cannot say, but Ali Pacha and his force were not half a mile from the foot of Kizil Tépé when a sentry challenged, and, receiving no response, fired his rifle. He at least did his duty; and I am glad to believe that he escaped in the darkness which—I suppose even at the time of full moon—is proverbially thicker just before the dawn. At least we found nobody there, though many a bullet

went in search of him, for the alarm was not long in being taken up, and then concealment was of no avail. A trusty guide led the column on to the spot appointed, and our guns, which had been kept in the rear to dull the sound of their wheels, were now hurried up to the front. The flashes of the rifles and the rumble and rattle of the guns gave the enemy entrenched on Kizil Tépé an indication of our direction, and a good many shells soon fell not far off, but luckily, like many of the Russian projectiles, two at least did not burst, and of the rest none did any material damage, though one poor horse fell to rise no more.

There was just the faintest tinge of the golden glory of the coming morn over the triple peak of Mount Alaghez, which, bathed in the full flood of moonlight, cut the clear and deep blue sky yet studded by myriad stars—in other words it was a quarter to four o'clock—when the head of the column began the work cut out for it. This was no less a task than to storm the entrenched camp of the enemy situated on the steep hill called Kizil—an irregular three-buttressed mass of basalt covered with red scoria and other evidences of once active volcanic agency, and having for the most part an inclination from the plain of from forty to sixty degrees. But on the southern side the buttress gives a somewhat gentler slope, though even here a horse can hardly walk down it, and it was on this slope that the attack was made.

The honour of leading was assigned to the brigade of Mehemet Bey, commonly known among us as "*the Captain*"—a great favourite of the Mushir, and an officer whom I have already highly spoken of, and who received the unusual distinction of being mentioned in the Russian despatches for having defended with heroic resolution one of the forts of hapless Ardahan. No better choice could

have been made for such a task than this Prussian Pole, who is at once clear, calm, cool, and courageous, and who has, by his conduct yesterday, confirmed a reputation already established.

To the south and east of Kizil Tépé rises a smaller hill, the ground plan of which may be said to resemble that of a redan. Its sides are almost scarped, but it is just possible to clamber up it, and at one place to get up a light gun. Lower than Kizil Tépé, it yet commands the long slope leading to the summit of the eminence on which the Russians had scooped some rifle pits, with much labour, out of the red scoria, and which was crowned by one of those ancient rough stone walls common on the top of many of the hills in this country. The Russians and their sympathisers have taunted the Turks with fighting well only behind fortifications. I cannot even give the enemy credit for so much as this.

Already it has been my duty to point out that Russian fighting, in Armenia at least, seldom has stamina in it, and I have now to record that four small battalions of Turks fairly beat in pluck and endurance three large battalions of Russians, who had the advantage of position, of shelter pits, and of height. Indeed, the bulk of the fighting fell to one Turkish battalion—the first of Mehemet Bey's brigade—composed of Anatolian peasants, with only the admixture of half a dozen Poles, mostly deserters. On the other hand, the Russian defence was trusted chiefly to the 157th Regiment of the 40th Division, though there were also some chasseurs of the 19th Division.

The Turks crept slowly up the slope of Kizil Tépé, and more quickly along that of the redan hill, which was virtually undefended. They were well covered by their guns, which pitched hundreds of shells exactly where they were wanted,

while the Russians could not depress their guns sufficiently to sweep the whole of the slope. In fact, when once the Turks were within a certain range their guns were of great effect, and those of the enemy were merely burning powder. Once and once only was the result doubtful from the moment the nature of the fighting was seen. A Turkish battalion which should have moved up in support misapprehended the nature of its orders, and was about to attack on the wrong side of the hill, not being therefore available at the point at which it was required. Add to this that although the Turks had been supplied with 150 rounds per man, when the fighting had lasted an hour and a half the ammunition began to fail, and it was impossible to get any more without falling back for it.

Now, the drivers of the bullock wagons and of the horses which bring up the boxes of ammunition have throughout this whole campaign, and more especially in recent fighting, displayed marvellous *sang froid*; but it would have been too much to have asked them to take packages of cartridges up a glaxis like that on which the Turks were advancing. So for a few minutes a portion of Mehemet Bey's troops had to fall back behind the shoulder of the slope, and just then it certainly looked as though the attempt might fail. So thought the Muscov officers, for they made their men leave shelter and descend the slope. Here our shells played terrible havoc among them, and they became in a very few moments, unsteady, though in open order, and taking advantage of the cover afforded by boulders. Our fellows having hurriedly snatched up a new supply of ammunition, went again at the glaxis, and in half an hour were masters of it, and even of a portion of the top of the hill.

It was about half-past five o'clock when the first point

of Kizil Tépé was taken, and then the Ottoman battalion—it is a great pity they have no regimental numbers in this service, for the purposes of distinction—went at the rest of the top with the bayonet. For this, however, the enemy did not wait. They went without the contact of the cold steel, and fled in every direction, like so many frightened hares. Nothing could have been more creditable to the Turkish army than the way in which Kizil Tépé was taken, and, low as my opinion of Russian pluck has become, I did expect to see the Muscovites fight better behind shelter than they did here. When they gave in, masses of troops were coming to their support, and another half-hour's resistance might have changed everything; but it was not in them to hold out any longer, and so we took Kizil Tépé. If there is an "order for valour" in the Turkish service, every man in this assault should have it, and first of all the brigadier.

Mehemet Bey was wounded in the breast by a bullet, but the lead happened to splash, and the injury is not serious. Ali Pacha was also wounded. A shell fell among stony ground, and multiplied itself by the fragments of rock that it scattered, so that his excellency received severe shocks on the head and legs. But neglecting the latter, and simply tying a handkerchief round the former, the gallant old gentleman refused to retire, and remained in action throughout the day.

As soon as the first alarm was given, the Russians moved out their whole force from the Kuruk Déré camp, and such forces as could be spared from the camp beyond the Arpa, which was crossed at the ford about four miles to the north of Anni. But they found all the advanced points held by Ottoman troops; and at five of these points the enemies came into contact almost simultaneously. I think the

actual first encounter, after the immediate vicinity of Kizil Tépé, to retake which three feeble attempts were made, was at Subatan, on our left centre, and it was certainly here that the Russians fought the most stoutly ; but here they had the advantage of cover from some of the farther buildings of the village, as well as from the sloping banks of the little river that here emerges from a great ravine, and runs towards Kizil Tépé. However, the Turks held a shelf of rock above the village, and established there a battery, which before long made it impossible for the enemy to sustain the combat. Nor could this battery be turned, as on former occasions, when the engagement was only partial, for we now held both the ravines by which such a movement had before been possible. By seven o'clock the action was general all the way from the Alexandropol road to two miles south of Kizil Tépé.

At the latter point the idea was to turn the Russian left, and force it back either upon the main body or upon Gumri. In the former case a Sedan upon a small scale would have been the result ; in the latter our centre and left would have been left alone to deal with the Russian right. But, luckily for the Muscovs, a ravine with steep sides runs from the rear of Kizil Tépé to the banks of the Arpa, while the side of it held by the Turks had a slope towards the enemy rendering it difficult if not impossible to either work guns to advantage or to manœuvre troops without exposing them too greatly.

On the other hand, the Russian side was bold, with a roll in the ground behind it, and although all the movements of the enemy in rear of this roll were visible from Kizil Tépé, the nature of the top of that mountain prevented guns from being brought to bear upon the invaders at this point. The enemy was forced back to this

ravine in about two hours, but past it we did not penetrate all day. Possibly if we had possessed two or three more battalions on the right the thing might have been accomplished, but beyond the necessary camp guard left behind—and it seemed to me perilously weak—every company of infantry we had was engaged in essential work, either as skirmishers or as reserves. Hashin Pacha did indeed make the attempt with some cavalry, but a strong body like the Russian left, in which there were no fewer than twenty-one or twenty-two battalions, need not fear a few cavalry in its rear, and accordingly it disposed of them with a shower of shells and a couple of regiments of horse. One of our batteries sent in the same direction had to retire, as it was unsupported by infantry, and could not well depend upon the sporadic assistance of irregular cavalry. On the Alexandropol road the Kars troops had no difficulty of the kind, and Hussein Hami Pacha, working well in unison with the left of Moussa Pacha, continually made way, the rolling ground now rising almost into hills, now undulating into long and winding valleys, favouring the handling of troops that could and would move.

By eight o'clock so much ground had been gained here, and so advantageously had the Kars division taken up its position with its guns on two knolls, that the Russians felt it necessary to make an effort to cut it off from Moussa's division, and this they tried in two places. Their artillery fire was almost overpowering in quantity here, and if it had been as good in quality there is no telling what the result would have been.

But to take only a couple of instances. I was for an hour close behind Mehemet Ghazi and his staff on a clump of rocks rising several feet above the soil, and having in front of it a Turkish battery. In two minutes by my watch

I counted sixty-seven Russian shells, intended either for us or for the battery before us. Of these only two burst near our guns, five did not explode, three fell close to us; but not near enough to even scare our horses; twelve or thirteen fell short, and the rest went over, many a long way. A little later I found twenty-two shells in one minute aimed at a battery that was near a ledge of rocks on which Hassan Pacha had taken his stand. All of these but five went over, three or four of them fully half a mile, while two fell among our guns and three went short. Firing like this is merely waste of powder, lead, and iron, and it was safer to be standing exposed in a group of some seventy persons, with Mehemet Ghazi, than to be approaching his excellency from any direction whatever.

On the other hand, our fire found the Russian batteries pretty frequently, and it was actually funny to see the velocity of the gunners' movements as the little puff of black smoke opened and spread upwards and outwards. The fire of the Russian infantry here was better, but it was by no means well kept up, the men appearing to prefer the shelter of the long white feather grass to rapidity of movement, while many of them quite clearly took no aim at all.

Our skirmishers—most of whom on this part of the line were armed with Peabody-Martini—were probably only tenth-rate marksmen; but it was pleasant to see that they took pains, and did not in the least mind raising their heads and shoulders out of the grass to get a better aim. In front of Subatan they suffered severely, and the great heavy bullets of the Russian rifles frequently caused as frightful wounds of the head and face as a shell could have done.

When our men were called upon to advance, they obeyed with a light heart, and their *elan* had in it some-

thing indescribably contagious, for it brought both myself and Mr. Bell, of the *Illustrated London News*, much farther to the front than we had any business to be. But once forward the difficulty was to get back, and this was only accomplished after the enemy had failed in their double attack, owing to the resolute attitude and the steady fire of the Turkish nizams and redifs. For nearly three hours there was a disgusting sameness about the position. At one place we gave way a little, and the Russians cautiously advanced; at another the operation was reversed, but with more dash in our forward movement.

It may interest those gallant volunteers who on Easter Mondays approach fearlessly within a hundred yards of each other's ranks to learn that nowhere besides Kizil Tépé, but once, did I see the lines of the skirmishers nearer than 800 or 900 yards from one another, and they were more generally a full mile apart. The once was beyond Subatan, and that for but a few minutes, both parties finding the fire unpleasantly hot, and retiring at the same instant. Indeed, there were usually cavalry of both sides in one or other of the "dips" that run through the plain between the hostile guns and lines of skirmishers.

At midday, having had nothing all the morning but about four ounces of black bread and a cup of cold tea, I tried to get milk and bread in Subatan, but failed, by reason of the utter desertion of the village by the inhabitants, who had fled to Kerchané for the time being, and, as a matter of fact, I got no food till six o'clock.

But seeing no prospect of anything like close quarters, seeing that the Russians were increasing their distance from our left centre, which certainly did not follow up the enemy as it might, either with guns or infantry, and the cavalry who did go out would have done as well if they had stopped

behind—but I believe Chefket Pacha who is only an acting ferik, did not like to interfere with Mehemet Ghazi, whose rank is at once *per saltum*, and substantive—seeing, moreover, that firing was freshening up in the direction of Kizil Tépe, I worked my way thither again, reaching the top of the hill, under shell fire, about two o'clock. And here I found the dead bodies of the Russian soldiers stripped sometimes to the skin, always to the shirt. There could be no excuse here about Koords. There were none but regular infantry and artillery on the eminence, and yet not only were the horses that had fallen flayed for the sake of the skin of their backs; but the poor victims of the ambition of the house of Romanoff were left naked, every morsel of uniform and trousers having disappeared, in one case at least before the breath had left the body.

There lies in front of me as I write a photograph, which I picked up by the side of a Russian youth, from whose pockets it had evidently been contemptuously extracted and cast away. Under the photograph is written in ink the name "Ermolaeff," and the photographer, who is a vile hand at his trade, is called "B. Berkmeister," but the name of the town is torn off the back. The likeness is one of the poor lad, evidently taken the first day he had his uniform on, so stiff does he look in it. He regards the camera with more perturbation than I dare say he showed at the Turkish guns, and beside him stands a careworn woman, evidently, from the resemblance, his mother, who wears a cotton gown and the cape and hood of the Russian female peasant in good circumstances. One of these photographs is all she will now have to remind her of her poor boy; and if I could only learn who and where she is, I would go to some trouble to send her this daub of the photographic art.

On the summit I met Ali Pacha, Hassan Pacha, whose young aide-de-camp was wounded, Mehemet Ghazi Pacha, with his too numerous staff, General Sir A. Kemball, and his aide-de-camp, Lieut. Dougall, R.N., and in a lull of the Russian firing we had leisure to examine the position. It was quite clear all was over but the usual artillery finale. Our left was as far forward as it was possible to push it without storming the entrenchments of the Russian right camp at Kuruk Déré. Our left centre was too far in the rear to be able to catch up the enemy in time to effect any purpose, and its guns were exchanging fire with those of the Russians at about five miles distance, the trails being let into a pit in the ground to obtain the necessary elevation. On the right centre we held Kizil Tépé, the redan, and a small ridge beyond ; and on the right our line virtually extended to the river Arpa, about five or six versts from Gumri.

The Russian right was at their camp on the Gumri road, and their left was concentrated with thirteen battalions on the ravine before spoken off as preventing our flanking. Two of these battalions were in range, and in front of them was a battery. In the centre—but before we could examine this part of the position, Sir Arnold Kemball's keen eye descried a gun in the battery just mentioned being brought to bear upon us, and we—all but Sir Arnold, whose coolness is appalling—retired to the shelter of the wall of stones with as much alacrity as was consistent with dignity and coolness. Hardly were we rested when the Russians commenced their farewell to Kizil Tépé.

And when this kindly farewell had ceased, and it was safe to leave the hill, even the distant firing of the artillery on each side was over, and Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha, fighting in open ground, had won a great victory, beating the

vaunted Russian troops not only in line of battle, but from behind very strong entrenchments, and having lost as many, indeed, as 1,200 men killed and wounded; but not without having inflicted on the enemy a loss of at least 3,000 men, including a general of the Russian cavalry.

We took no guns and few prisoners, because the enemy kept always at a safe distance; and even in his retreat from Kizil Tépé, the presence of a commanding force close at hand enabled him to carry off his cannon. But what the Russian army itself thought of the day may be guessed when I say that during the evening the deserters to our camp were very numerous, and included all ranks, from a colonel of Cossacks to privates of the line.

The Russian army, as we all know—or should know, for we have been told often enough—is fighting for the liberation and protection of the Christians in European Turkey. Perhaps it may help to account for the indifferent conduct of the Muscovite troops in Asia, that the bulk of them must necessarily be very lukewarm in this holy cause, seeing they are largely Mussulmans, if we may judge from dead, wounded, prisoners, and deserters.

On my return to head-quarters I found in a chat with the Mushir that he had himself had a narrow escape, his horse having been wounded by a shell. But I am glad to say there was no casualty among my friends in the tents of the *quartier-général* except the slight wound of Hassan Pacha's youngest aide, who, like old Ali, steadfastly refused to leave the ground, and remained under fire all day. The troops on our side numbered perhaps 31,000 men, with about sixty-six guns, inclusive of mountain pieces, of which there were only ten, the rest being on the camp entrenchments. I counted ninety or ninety-two Russian guns in action, and I believe others saw as many as 130,

while they had some sixty-two or sixty-three battalions all told, in the field, making possibly as many as 40,000 men. But if they had had 60,000 the result would have been the same—they were both out-fought and out-generalled.

This morning the Russians were found to have returned to their camp on the Gumri road, not that they had evacuated it, but that during the evening the bulk of their force was directly between us and Gumri. Both armies were sufficiently exhausted to be willing to spend the Sunday in peace; but the Mushir, desiring to give both the enemy and his own men a tangible proof of the results of yesterday, resolved to move his forces down to the plain. Accordingly, this evening we are as a wedge with the point . . . close to Russia. Kars, nearly eighteen miles from our head-quarters, is one angle of the triangle; Anni is another and Kizil Tépé, with the ravine beyond, is the third. Of course by moving out here we offer great advantages to the enemy if he decides to attack, but all that has been taken into account. At the worst we have always the fortified camp—in which we have spent so many patient weeks—behind us to fall back upon if necessary; and the point of our wedge runs along a slight ridge which connects the village of Kerchané at the foot of our old position with Kizil Tépé. On this ridge lies a division which has this evening [already thrown up well- though hurriedly-made earthworks to cover its sides.

During the afternoon there has been much conversation on the subject of the behaviour of our irregular cavalry yesterday, and, in fact, nothing could have been worse. Wherever one looked within our front line there were to be found these fellows spending valuable hours in pretending to water their horses, or more flagrantly skulking and going to sleep in the shadow of corn ricks, or even sponging

upon the villagers in the rear, when they might have been at least picking up stragglers of the enemy. Remonstrance does nothing with these *suwarries*, but perhaps shooting a few of them for cowardice might have its effect. When our right wing yesterday was actually in want of troops, and these men might have been employed as dismounted tirailleurs, about eighty of them were under my own eyes riding their weeds of horses after a young yellow fox, which ultimately escaped, in spite of the perseverance for an hour of these sportsmen out of place.

I find I was wrong above in saying there had been a perfectly quiet day. While I was in my tent writing, a Russian column about midday appeared approaching Kizil Tépé from the direction of Kuruk Déré, along a dip in the terrain. It was seen by Mehemet Bey long before it was discerned from our main camp, and our whole front turned out. The enemy only showed his infantry by accident, for they were no sooner above the level of the ground than they were ordered to retire, and nothing remained that we could make out but a regiment of Cossacks. They did not approach our front near enough to be received as we might have desired, and by two o'clock they had all disappeared.

August 28.—During last night the Russians made an excellent counter move. Of course, as they have the command of the left—that is their own—bank of the Arpa river, they can do as they please there; and so, leaving four brigades and a brigade of cavalry, as nearly as we can see, on the Gumri road, they have shifted the rest of their force across the river twice to the three hills known as Utch Tépé to the east, or rather east-south-east, of Kizil Tépé. They would thus have cut off our cavalry outlying beyond the latter point, but that the move was seen as soon as

made, though too late to be prevented. They are now on each side of the point of our wedge.

To-night, an attack being expected in the early morning, the head-quarters camp was quiet a good hour before the usual time; and I was returning from my regular visit last thing to the staff tent, when there came on a smart shower of rain, though the moon was shining brightly over Mount Alaghez. Looking up to see whether it would last, my attention was fixed by a most unusual phenomenon, of which a great deal more is heard than seen. Over our late camp on the Alagsdagh Dagh was a perfect lunar rainbow. How long it had been visible I cannot of course say, but it remained for fully ten minutes after I had called one of my *confrères* and as many officers as happened not to be asleep to see it.

The time at which I first saw it was ten minutes past nine, and when it began to disappear on the south side of the wondrous arc it seemed to increase in intensity on the northern side; so much so that more than one of the spectators declared they saw developed the colours of the spectrum; faintly, it is true, but still present. I could not convince myself that I actually saw colours, though there was something more, certainly, than a white arc, and I believe my friends associated with the arc the colours they are in the habit of seeing on such a celestial projection. Anyhow, a lunar rainbow is so rare that the appearance of one seems deserving of record, even in such a martial story as I have now been for months endeavouring to tell; and I have only to add that a scientific member of our little group computed the base of the arc to cover as much as seventeen degrees: at a guess I should myself have said twelve.

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEAR KERCHANÉ, *August 31.*—The

Grand Duke appears to have been rather of my opinion than of the Mushir's with regard to the strength of his position behind Utch Tépé, because in the course of yesterday he changed it, and removed the bulk of his forces to a point exactly between Kerchané and Gumri, so that now we see the latter stronghold right over his camp. He has always had a small dépôt camp at this spot, which is on the left bank of the Kars Tchai, and is therefore safe from attack without a previous alarm. But I do not know that he has greatly improved his position. On the Gumri road from Kars, but especially from the latter entrenched hill, he is far enough to render an attack on the position possible before he could come up to its rescue; and from the former he would be also far enough if our guns could be brought into play to prevent a junction, of which I am not sure. Anyhow, a few days must show, and I, for one, am content to wait and see whether a line like his, with a river to cross, can be held against a resolute onslaught on either flank, veiled by a feint on the other.

To-day, at noon, a royal salute was fired in honour of the anniversary of the enthronisation of the Sultan. For the first three guns it put us all on the *qui vive*; but when it was seen to be fired from the very midst of our lines, people remembered that a year ago to-day the young monarch ascended the throne under, as he touchingly told Mr. Layard, circumstances unparalleled, to take charge of an empire for whose condition he could not be responsible, whose state he was most desirous to ameliorate, and for whose sake he earnestly desired peace, and even disarmament, if Russia would only set the example. And I cannot help asking myself, after four months' war, what has been gained by the aggressors, and how much the worse is Turkey before the world than if she had been let alone,

but for the excesses of some irregular troops, both in Europe and Asia, whose acts she has speedily repudiated in the most emphatic way, namely, by disbanding those against whom proof could be obtained ?

All the rest of the day we have simply been watching the movements of small columns, going about in front and rear and on the flanks of the main camp of the enemy. For the rest, we have been keeping the Moslem Sunday in a way that could not be objected to on the ground of dullness by any Mussulman Sabbatarian, if such a being exists. An odd Tcherkess, or Koord, has now and again been trying to show that he is brave enough to fire off his Winchester in the air ; " Captain " Mehemet Pacha has been giving the last look to his entrenchments ; several of the staff have been doing me the honour of consuming a modest dish of tea in the shadow of my tent, and I have been thinking a good deal of certain false statements made by the *Golos*, and by hardly less direct Russian agents in Erzeroum, respecting the doings of this army and the way it is threatened.

The Erzeroum telegrams of a well-known agency have been systematically used by a Greco-Armenian clique to minimise the successes and the merits of Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha and his army. Russians have been represented over and over again as having penetrated to places of which they have not been within many miles ; and falsehoods as regards military matters generally are despatched every day, while the *bonâ fide* telegrams of responsible correspondents actually with the army, and in a position to know what does take place, are limited in number though not in matter, and can only be sent over the military wires by special permission.

When I sought the commander-in-chief's permission last

night to send a denial of some of these fabrications at the rear, it was natural that the attention of his excellency should be called to the subject, and the result will, I have no doubt, be that a stop will be put to the machinations of certain *misérables* who, taking Turkish money—it may be the money of other countries—in one capacity, are not ashamed to serve Russian purposes in another. All the correspondents here have at some time been deceived by this clique, and all have now come to know that none of its information and none of its statements can be trusted; while the more confident and particular they are, the more likely are they to have been invented.

While upon this subject, I may be permitted to say that my communications have borne witness to the absolute falsity of the statement of some Constantinopolitan correspondent that in the Turkish provinces correspondents who send nothing but “Russian atrocities” are especially favoured by the authorities, and that it is impossible to send independent news by either telegraph or letter. I have sent by both; and if it be true, as I believe, that on one occasion the bags were tampered with between Erzeroum and Trebizond, I can only say in that very week I had written as frankly as usual on Turkish shortcomings, and not a word failed to reach England as I had sent it.

What may be the facts in respect of the correspondents with the Turkish army in Europe, I, of course, do not know; but Russophiles will seek in vain to excuse the rigid rule of the enemy over the correspondents on their side by anything that has been done by the Turkish officials in Asia, from Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha down to telegraph clerks.

For myself, I believe the liberty accorded here has been unexampled, and I know that in too many cases

that liberty has been abused; not, I am glad to say, by members of the profession to which I am proud to belong, but by amateurs, sometimes actually in the employment of the Turkish Government. Thus many of the London papers in the first days of August were led by the falsehood of a Russian column moving from Ardahan by Pennek or Panak on Erzeroum, to persuade themselves and their readers that we had nothing to do but to fall back on the Soghanly Dag, and leave Kars once more to be besieged. Yet on the last day of August here we are nearer the Russian frontier than ever. We have not had a single Russian within miles of Panak, where we have nine battalions and two batteries; and instead of Kars being besieged, the artillery commandant at Kars is only waiting the word to take his siege train to Gumri. So much for Erzeroum telegrams!

CHAPTER XV.

September 1.—A lazy day, very! Nothing to do but to sit in the door of the tent, and dream of stubble and turnips. It is true that in the morning we found the Russian centre camp extended a little bit towards Kuruk Déré, which in part meets my criticism of yesterday; and in the evening, Drs. Casson and Buckby, of Lord Blantyre's Society, at last appeared in camp with two araba loads of stores, etc., having been in Erzeroum for two months, arranging and working a hospital there.

What untold suffering might have been prevented had they only arrived one week earlier! But let us be thankful that even in the nineteenth week of the war we have received some skilled English help for our wounded, and, what was perhaps as much needed, a supply of good stores. The doctors, after calling on Sir Arnold Kemball, paid a visit to the Mushir, and will, I believe, enter on their duties to-morrow morning, when it seems far from improbable they may receive a baptism of blood; for we have been far too quiet during the last few days for mischief not be brewing. But I can hear nothing of the Stafford House supplies, and as a telegram stating this fact has to-night been passed for the military wires to Erzeroum by the commander-in-chief, it is clear he knows nothing of them either, as indeed he told me yesterday.

And yet it is two months since the English public were told in print that the Committee had the receipts

in their possession for the stores sent out. Surely there is something here that requires very close looking into. I impute nothing to anybody, but I cannot forget that I saw men dying this day week all over the field for want of a little help—even unskilled help might have done something if it had had the appliances.

September 2.—Drs. Casson and Buckby lost no time in getting to work to-day, and in fixing a site somewhat in rear of the camp for their general hospital, without prejudice to a flying hospital which will be ready to be sent to the front whenever we have an action. Dr. Casson tells me that a portion of the few stores he has brought with him are from the Stafford House funds, and I am glad that even by a dribble we have been at length recognised by that committee. Now that they have found out there is such an army as that of Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha, perhaps we may hope for something like a decent contribution before the winter sets in and the roads hither become impracticable. All the medical stores of English origin that are here now are about enough for two such battles as that of yesterday week.

In default of anything else to do this lovely Sunday, I have had another long ride round our wonderful position, and as, perhaps, the most important part of it, to Kizil Tépé, close by which I had a long chat with Moussa Pacha, who, as I think I have mentioned before, was twenty odd years, and until lately, a general officer in the Russian service. His excellency doubts the rumour that Prince Mirsky has really taken over the command from General Loris Melikoff, and he has reasons for his doubts. In the first place, he knows that Prince Mirsky is not only a brave soldier, but a good general, and the handling of the Russian troops recently has not been

suggestive of good generalship, or even of cultivated intelligence. In the second, deserters and prisoners alike declare Melikoff is still at head-quarters, giving the Grand Duke abundant reason for his favourite manifestation of discontent—namely, a *pas seul* on his uniform cap. Moussa Pacha tells me that he knows of only four Mussulman infantry regiments in the enemy's army, but he agrees with me that they have lately been pushed into rather more dangerous positions than quite fell to their share in this most Christian war, which, as he said, shows how fast civilization is spreading!

When I went over Kizil Tépé, I saw that not only a breastwork I recommended to the Mushir was finished, but that the whole hill has become a vast fortification, such as would defy twenty times the number of its defenders, even if the attack were made by the best troops in the world, to say nothing of such as lie between us and Gumri. As for the Russian position, the more I look into it the more I am convinced that it can be both carried and turned. They have entrenched only the more northern of the three hills of Utch Tépé, and there is a wide stretch of good fighting ground between these eminences and the Arpa.

Three guns on the more southern hill would make the fortified one untenable in half an hour, and the advance of a division against Kuruk Déré would cause such a flutter in the Russian camp that another working round to the southward would have an easy time of it comparatively. And so it would seem the Russian staff themselves think, for they have retired a brigade to a bluff about seven miles in their rear, and have entrenched it right on the Gumri road, "in case of accidents."

Moussa Pacha estimates the enemy's force now at not more than 30,000 men. Judging by the look of the camps,

I should say this was a very liberal allowance, and I doubt if two-thirds of that number could go into line of battle. One of these days, perhaps, we shall see ; and if it is not to-morrow, why, in sheer terror of another idle day I will go into Kars and waste a little *caimé* in the bazaar as an excuse for a chat with Hussein Bey, who is now as often as not commandant of the fortress as well as of the artillery, vice Reis Ahmed Pacha, who holds the nominal command during the absence of Mushir Mustafa and Faizy Pacha at the Ardahan court-martial in Erzeroum, but spends much of his time in the camp, where he is personally liked and believed in as an administrator, though as a soldier thought to be "no great shakes."

KARS, *September 3*.—As there was nothing doing at the camp to-day beyond a brigade inspection by the Mushir, I carried out my threat of last night, and visited the Kars bazaar. The word Kars has itself two significations in the Armenian tongue. One, to which I have before referred, is filthy ; the other is a young maiden. It is from the latter, I believe, that the city takes its name, for it was built by an early Armenian king in honour of his daughter. But no place in the world deserves the former name more thoroughly, especially in the vicinity of the bazaar, where the streets are literally twelve to fifteen inches deep in mud after a shower of rain, and I have known my horse sink over the knee.

Figure to yourself a long, low, half-roofed, wooden shed about 300 yards long, and with low openings on each side, covered like a pent-house. These are the shops, each about the size of an underground cobbler's stall in London, in which Turks, Persians, and Armenians make their living. How some of them contrive to exist is a curious problem. They appear to sell nothing,

but to spend the livelong day in chatter with successive groups that squat on the front board which serves as a counter, as they themselves squat on the rear board. Nay, many of the Moslems, whose entire stock-in-trade consists of a few buttons of German make, a bottle of sugar candy, a pound or two of nails, five or six tobacco boxes, twenty Brummagem rings, two lead pencils, a stick of sealing-wax, and eight or ten rope halters,—the outside value of the lot being, perhaps, a sovereign—rather resent the idea that they should be called upon to do any trade, and most grumblingly name their prices when urgently entreated to do so. But they refuse, as a rule, to take the trouble to give change, and it is certain that they do not like the colour of the Christian's money.

At the south end of this long shed, however, the scene is busier. There a howling mob clamours round a dozen stalls in which half-ripe or rotten fruit is being sold at prices absurdly small, even for such rubbish. Why cholera does not more than decimate the population of Kars every year—what with the bad fruit and the filth and the hot sun—is more than I can say.

The bazaar is always crowded in all its parts ; but the crowds come and go from the fruit stalls, not from the other end, where it is a positive compliment to have a needle, or a pound of sugar, or a rope halter sold to you. But around this ramshackle bazaar is a neighbourhood in which real business is done. Here, under strict lock and key—only turned for likely customers—'cute Armenians keep wines, spirits, and liqueurs, the stock of the first and last being apparently inexhaustible, though money would not to-day procure a bottle of brandy or any English spirit, indeed of any spirit at all but rum made on the spot, or the vile mastic of the country. English beer in

bottle, sour by reason of bad keeping, can be had in some of these places at exorbitant prices, equal to about half a crown for a nominal quart; and here can be bought also the baker's dozen of nastinesses which are called by the native wines. But in one of these caves it is well that the customer should take heed how he sits down. The most loathsome insects have possession of the seats, and vigorously resent intrusion. The same remark applies to even the best houses in Kars, where the divans are the breeding-places of more than the insect-plagues of Egypt.

Outside the bazaar proper sharp-eyed Armenians deal in Birmingham wares generally and German fancy goods in particular, Russian china, French and Austrian glass, and the worst of English cotton goods, and nearly always contrive to "best" the stranger, by means of local customs in currency. All prices are quoted in "bad" money. When the Mussulman condescends to deal, he gives you change of four or five piastres out of a twenty piastre note for an article which he has quoted to you at twenty piastres. But you nearly always have to ask the Armenian dealer for the change.

The wealthier merchants live, or rather carry on their dealings, more remotely still; in little dens hid away in the side of lofty markets, where the livelong day they hold levées of their friends and cronies, and care for no order of less than a hundred piastres. On that sum they will try to do the unwary to the extent of 50 and even 100 per cent. Thus in one of these shops I bought some under-shirts. Liking them, and wanting more, I sent my servant back to the warehouse. I had paid seventy piastres in paper each—he paid fifty in "bad" money, or forty in *caimé*!

In various streets round the bazaar cookshops emit

their savoury smells. Here can be bought fairly cooked food, but the purchaser must carry it away. There is no convenience for eating. There are tea-houses, but eating is not customary in them, and there is no restaurant in Kars. There you may see the best people from the country wandering about the streets or squatting on a doorstep, and devouring a bit of bread held in one hand while a plate of stew is carried in the other. The great consumption of all is tobacco, which is as cheap as it is vile. There are two shops dealing in this article for one in anything else, except fruit, and some of the latter take to the sale of tobacco in winter.

Dirt everywhere reigns supreme. You buy loaf-sugar, and have to clear it of the fly-blows; a piece of bread, and find the bottom crust covered with grease; a pipe-stem, and discover that some one has tried to season it for you. It is all the same throughout the whole range of commerce here—dirt, cheating, indifference, and gossip have possession of the city in its business aspects; and to an European there is something in the whole aspect of the place, the people, and the wares, that inevitably suggests a terrible irritation of the skin, even as one stumbles through the dirty and broken streets, which would jolt to pieces in five minutes any carriage, however strong, short of a Turkish araba or an English army wagon. And the worst of it is, that after undergoing all sorts of discomfort and a long journey into Kars from the camp, the chances are twenty to one against getting what you want.

HEAD-QUARTERS, *September 4.*—Nothing whatever doing.

September 7.—After a few days of dulness some brisk firing in the neighbourhood of Utch Tépé broke the

monotony at daybreak this morning. It was only an affair of outposts, but it was something new, for the enemy had observed a remarkable assiduity in keeping himself to himself since the battle of Kizil Tépé on Saturday week. He had even allowed some of Ali Pacha's cavalry to get round to the back of his left wing the other morning without resenting it further than by a few distant and random shots, and soon afterwards he established a battalion and some guns upon the more southern of the "Three Hills," by way of warning off any too adventurous Tcherkesses who might find themselves in that direction.

But there are some people in the world who will not take a friendly hint, and accordingly at the first dawn of to-day the enemy found two or three squadrons of Circassians close up to his lines, and apparently quite regardless of his battalions upon the hill. Such presumption must, of course, be promptly punished, and accordingly a lot of dragoons and those other emissaries of Muscovite civilization, who are called Cossacks, came out in force, the Cossacks especially strong. Our fellows, as is their wont, spread themselves all over the plain in twos and threes.

The enemy, as is his exceedingly silly practice, remained chiefly in column, and kept two battalions of infantry, which he also showed on the western slopes of Utch Tépé, in the same close order. There was a good deal of desultory firing, and what was the consequence? We had two Tcherkesses killed and seven wounded,—only two of them at all seriously,—while the Russians must have had several scores hit. They wasted a good deal of shell fire, especially of shrapnel, from one of their Utch Tépé batteries without once touching man or horse; and they allowed one of their Cossack squadrons to come to close quarters, with the result that one of our men and a good

many of theirs were disabled by sabre wounds. Then we showed some battalions and one battery, and that finished the business, for the enemy had evidently no stomach for a fight, having recently had quite as much of that amusement as he felt to be good for him. Chefket Pacha, commanding the third division, had his own reasons for not forcing on a serious encounter; and so in two hours from the commencement, or about seven o'clock, both parties were back in their own lines, Drs. Casson and Buckby, who had hurried out in case their services were needed, returning into camp with our little column, and dressing the few wounds of the men who had been hurt, chiefly with the heavy bullets of the Russian carbines.

Chefket Pacha's reasons for not making the affair a general one, as he might easily have done, were based upon a knowledge of certain facts which were allowed to leak out at head-quarters in the course of the morning. The fact is the Mushir has come to the conclusion that the time has arrived for an attempt to drive the enemy out of the morsel of Turkish territory he still holds on this side of the empire. For several days long telegrams in cypher have been passing to and from Batoum, and yesterday Dervish Pacha despatched one detailing the dispositions he has made in accordance with the instructions of Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha. Similar news also reached us from Panak, where, as you already know from me, there are six or seven battalions and two batteries, which very handy little force has been entrusted to the command of Colonel Hassan Bey as brigadier.

As I have telegraphed to you, the troops from Batoum and from Panak will act together with a few battalions sent from Kars, in the first place for the recovery of Ardahan,

which, as is reported, the Russians have dismantled, and which therefore will not require to be besieged, though it is quite possible that since the change in the general military situation the enemy may have re-armed some of the works. As soon as that object is achieved the united troops will proceed into Russia to cut the communications between Tiflis and Gumri.

More than this I cannot say now ; and I should be sorry to repay the kindness and confidence of the commander-in-chief by so much as a word that might be judged indiscreet. However, I have had authority to say at least so much, even by wire ; and I wait here only for the necessarily complementary movement—an advance on Gumri, which we shall possibly make in a few days.

Meanwhile we have something to think about in a story of a dashing exploit. A chief of the Karapapaks,—who are about the greatest border ruffians unhung, and who serve Turk and Russ with the most absolute impartiality, and very often, I fear, at the same moment—has his own grounds for sticking to the Turks at the present moment. I believe he finds them to pay pretty well ; that he cannot submit to any Russian general without the risk of paying a heavy penalty for his crimes ; that it may even be his sympathies, if he owns to any such weaknesses, are with the Ottomans ; and that he has more freedom of action accorded to him on this than he would have on the other side. During the siege of Kars he half-victualled the army of Hussein Hami Pacha by his predatory forays, in which, it was said, he did not always spare the property of Turkish farmers, though he certainly made sad havoc among some of the Russian commissariat trains. In other words, he is neither more or less than a Moslem—an Asiatic—Rob Roy, who will not stick at trifles.

On Sunday he came and saw the Mushir, and on Sunday night he and three hundred of his clan crossed the Russian frontier to the north of the Gumri road, and made his way up by a little stream which you will see marked on a good map as a tributary of the Arpa Tchai, towards the town, or rather village, of Akbulak, which is away in the mountains behind Gumri, and on the best though perhaps not the shortest of the two roads to Tiflis. As Mahr Ali went, Akbulak is certainly not less than twelve hours from the frontier, or say thirty miles—by the Gumri road it is perhaps eighteen. With an audacity almost grand, he having struck the high-road, continued along it, though it must be used by troops and provision trains at nearly every hour in the day. Presently he encountered—in the course of his second day—a detachment of Cossacks, whom he attacked and put to the rout. The chief then held on again towards the interior, and came to a bridge near a place which you will find on the maps as Rokansky, and the bridge is hereabouts known as Parmaksiz.

Here the Russians have had a dépôt, and here our borderer effected the object of his raid. Having first beaten off a second detachment of Russian cavalry, he cut and carried off about a mile of the Tiflis telegraph wire, thus breaking communication not only between Gumri and its base, but between Gumri and its depot. From the latter he took 150 artillery horses, with, one authority says, their harness complete, and destroyed a number of stores he could not carry away. As he fell back towards our frontier he was met by two squadrons of Russian horse, commanded by a colonel. Nothing recking, he fell on this party sent out to search for him, and after a sharp engagement, in which the colonel was killed and a good many men on both sides “lost the number of

their mess," he got clear off with his booty, and as a proof of his story he sent the latter "clear and clean" into Kars this afternoon.

A more daring raid has not been perpetrated during this war; and what the fate of this black-capped mountaineer will be if the Muscovs get hold of him it is not difficult to guess, the more particularly as it is said the Czar has the honour of owning him as a subject. Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha is only using him on the perfectly justifiable plea, under the circumstances, that any stick is good enough to beat off a dog from one's premises.

And now I am sorry, as a chronicler of the camp, to have to refer to a matter in which my feelings are largely at variance with the course that the Turkish Government has felt itself bound to take. Among the few *bond fide* correspondents in this camp, there has been none who has commanded more esteem and personal regard than Captain Norman, late of the Bengal Staff Corps, who has represented *The Times* here for some four months. He is not only an experienced soldier, but he is a most excellent and kindly gentleman, and he has in him the material for an admirable correspondent.

During the first two months of his presence here, Captain Norman was on the best of terms with everybody, though in pursuance of what he deemed his duty, he wrote as frankly as I did myself on the obvious shortcomings of Turkish military administration. Later on he recognised in the very fullest manner the ability manifested in so marked a degree by the Mushir in the conduct of the campaign, and he has always, I believe, done justice to the qualities of the Turkish soldier, though perhaps he has allowed himself to think better of the Russians than their operations or their fighting power deserved. But some

things in his communications to London gave offence in high quarters at Constantinople, and about six weeks ago the Mushir was recommended to invite him to leave the camp. With that high consideration for the press which has throughout characterised Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha, the complaint was passed over, and Captain Norman remained for some time among us in the enjoyment of all the esteem to which he is so justly entitled.

During this week it appears that the Government have had reason to complain, as is alleged, of the accuracy of some of the news which he has transmitted, and it is added that he has himself declared in his journal how completely he is now out of accord with the Ottomans and their ways. As my *confrère* has been for a little time absent from the camp, I have not had an opportunity of learning from him the real state of the case, but I am told on the highest authority that he has been warned not to return hither and, indeed, to leave Armenia.

I regret this decision very sincerely, for by it I lose a colleague for whom it is impossible not to have a strong regard, and also because it is sure to be represented as an attempt on the part of the Porte to suppress all news that is not favourable to its cause. The latter accusation will not hold water; but I do think the Government—and this is the decision of the Government, not of the Mushir—might very well have allowed facts to answer the strictures of the journalist. I dismiss altogether as untenable the idea that the correspondent of *The Times* has transmitted any other news than such as he believed to be true; and if there was any news not true sent by telegraph from Erzeroum or elsewhere, it might have been stopped by the Censure at Constantinople. Else, what is the use of a Censure? Any news sent

by letter, and turning out erroneous or over-coloured, could not but have its evil tendency corrected by the course of events in the lapse of time necessarily occurring before its publication.

But I cannot allow the incident to pass without both telling the story as I understand it, and deploring the action of the Porte in the matter. Had the affair been left in the hands of the commander-in-chief in Asia, I am confident a different conclusion would have been arrived at. As it has not, it is well that the facts should be known, and that the Mushir should not be blamed for an act which has been done over his head, and which, whatever justification may be pleaded for it, would have been far better in every way left undone. The case is different in every essential from that of the news-makers and perverters of Erzeroum, on whom I for one should be glad to see swift and heavy judgment fall. On the one hand is an English gentleman incapable of wilful misrepresentation; on the other a miserable clique capable of little else. And it is too bad that Captain Norman should be smitten, and that vile cosmopolitan herd of Russian dupes, Armenian and Greek spies, and minor hangers-on of Government offices should be left free to continue their nefarious career. But perhaps this is done in order to give them the proverbial "rope enough," which must be long indeed if some of them do not stretch it.

September 9.—It is Sunday, and the second day of the great Turkish fast of Ramazan. We are as quiet as though it were the middle Sunday of a Wimbledon meeting, and the Subatan plain before us were Glen Albyn, between the regimental camp and the volunteer lines. It is true that this morning some Cossacks came into the valley in search of "ot," or grass, for their horses, and that we gave them a

welcome on to our ground in the shape of some Krupp shells, which sent them in search of grass elsewhere. But all day long we have had nothing else to do than to bask in the sun of one of the finest possible autumn days, and to wonder when that mutton broth, simmering on the wood fire built up between three stones, will be ready for dinner. And so I have been watching the soldiers of the headquarters guard at their frequent devotions near my tent, and hearing dreadful stories of the Kars hospitals.

I wonder in what other army some forty per cent. of the soldiers would voluntarily, four or five times a day, attend prayers conducted, in the absence of a mollah, by one of their own number—an open-air prayer meeting, in short. I am no latitudinarian in principle, but really I cannot help respecting these Islamites in their most regular and apparently sincere homages to the Supreme Being ; and so strict are they in their religious habits, that yesterday one of them came to our tents offering for sale the sheep served out to them for their rations, and presumably, in their judgment, forbidden during the great fast.

But on referring the question to the authorities, I find that these redifs have not an accurate notion of their Koran, in which it is expressly laid down, as I hear (for my remembrance of my Sale is ancient), that soldiers in the field are exempt from the obligation of the fast. When this was explained to the men, they replied that they had always fasted in Ramazan, and unless the Mushir wished they preferred to fast now. But the Mushir did desire that they should not fast ; for, as one of his staff said, “ If they starve themselves, how can they fight ? ” So to-day, at least once, I have seen the mutton-pans going on the fireplaces that are scooped out of the earth, and when the impending battle comes off the men will not be faint for lack of food.

I mention these things that they may give you an idea of the real Moslem spirit which animates this army. At first the men were very negligent of the precepts of the Prophet ; they were Moslem only in name. But "battle and sudden death " before their eyes every day have sent them to their knees ; and if any casual reader thinks I am what is called "preaching" when I say this, let that casual reader visit Moukhtar Pacha's troops, and see an army which is as religious, according to its lights, from commander-in-chief downwards, as ever were Cromwell's Ironsides or our crusading forefathers who fought the Saracen. That they are wrong is no reason their simple, childlike faith should not have its recognition.

What some of these poor fellows suffer when they are not killed, but only wounded, I have already essayed to give you some idea. But the worst remains to be told. Some two months since I described one of the Kars hospitals,—that in the new cavalry barrack,—and praised its arrangements, which were certainly not pressed at the time by numbers of patients. I hear now that since the battle of yesterday fortnight the "hasta khanés" are so crowded that the overflow has had to be provided for in temporary khanés.

In one of these 370 patients were crammed with wounds received at Kizil Tépé, and they were left, as the story goes, for two days and nights without treatment of any kind. It is not surprising, after this, to hear that only eighty of these are now alive. I hope and trust this is not true, but it certainly rests on excellent authority. Then what can be expected of even good treatment, when the drugs and medicaments are so vile ?

The head of the apothecaries' department of the Turkish army at Stamboul is a pacha with uncontrolled authority.

That pacha is also the proprietor of the principal drug store at Stamboul. He orders his drugs at his own prices from his own store ; and what is the consequence ? I need not waste space in saying. But this is not all. With the two honourable exceptions of Drs. Schœps and Rosenfeld, there is not one of the foreign doctors in Kars who does not scamp his work. They say their pay is irregular ; but what English medical man would ever put forward such a plea for a neglect which amounts to constructive murder ?

I could say more, but this is enough. Under present circumstances a man wounded in fight will do far better, even without a bed, here in a tent than in the poisoned atmosphere of a Kars hospital. And yet, in spite of all correspondents can write from here, your English societies will not send us doctors. Messrs. Casson and Buckby are invaluable, but, in the language of the Apostles on a memorable occasion, "What are they among so many ?"

CHAPTER XVI.

September 10.—To the tent of my next door neighbour is tethered by the leg a gallinaceous male of riotous propensities, little recking that he is only waiting his turn for the *pot au feu*. At one of the soldiers' tents on the other side of our little head-quarters plaza is a speckled creature of the same genus and sex. All day long, and also at a time which reasonable beings would call night, these champions flap their wings at one another and crow defiantly. The bird on this side would fain get at the other, but he is held by the leg, and, in order to show that he is not put out by the circumstance—indeed, by anything—when he is pulled up short by the string he flaps twice as hard as before and crows ever so much more loudly.

Are we not very much like these fowls? The string which has been holding us so long here or hereabouts has for at least one of its strands the incapacity of certain officials at Erzeroum. They have appeared incapable of an effort until now that they have had the option put very plainly before them by Redschiid Pacha of better work or prompt dismissal; and I am told that already there is an improvement visible in the organization of the transport trains. But, although we have now enough provisions and ammunition to go on with, it will need yet some days to bring up our supplies to such a pitch that we can venture on an advance against the Russian positions and Gumri. *Coûte que coûte*, that advance should have been at least attempted before a month; but we wait, in the first in-

stance, the news of the flanking movement to the north, and how it is faring. If it succeeds, and if the troops that retake Ardahan continue their march over or along the Russian frontier to the south, what can save Gumri? I confess that I, for one, can see nothing to interpose between Hussein Bey—not yet Hussein Pacha!—with the Kars siege train and the Russian frontier stronghold but such a victory of Tergukasoff over Ismail Pacha as would release the army of the former and send it to the help of Alexandropol, the very bastions and redoubts of which, so clear is the air, I can see as I sit on the ground at my tent door and write on my knees, which for months have been the only desk I have known.

And what are the chances of the Russian general obtaining such a success? It is true he has nearly all the Russian cavalry that is in Asia; true also that he has not less than eighty pieces of artillery. But Ismail has a fine position along the heights of the Katch Geduk Dagħ or western spur of Ararat, holding the only two roads available for cannon or cavalry across the ridge that separates the plain of Alashguerd from the plain of Erivan.* He has 5,000 to 6,000 horse, has seven batteries, with two more going up, in all making fifty-six guns, and has thirty-eight battalions, some of which are 800 strong, to Tergukasoff's twenty-seven or twenty-eight.

If Ismail does not winter at Erivan, he can at least hold his opponent in check. If he so holds him, and if our movement to the north does not conspicuously fail, our troops will winter in Gumri. But Moukhtar Pacha is not the man to be content with one string to his bow. He has made provision not merely as though we were to have no more successes, but as though the rest of the campaign

* See map.

were destined to reverse the advantages he has acquired. Thus he has ordered the formation of a large provision and animal dépôt at Yenikeui, the other side of the Soghanly Dagħ, with an advance dépôt between it and Kars. This will be of use in any case when the severe weather sets in, but it should be of particular advantage in case of an Ottoman reverse. Need I add that ammunition will be stored in these dépôts as well as provisions?

And, speaking of ammunition, I may say I have been for some time trying to find out the nature of a new percussion fuze for shell which has been recently adopted in the Ottoman service, and the reports on which as well from the Danube as hence have been most favourable. It is so sluggish in one respect, that if a loaded shell with one of these fuzes is dropped in any way from a height of thirty-two feet, no explosion will follow, no matter how hard may be the ground. A fall of thirty-six to forty or forty-five feet, however, invariably fires the fuze, and in no single instance in which shell have been fired with this fuze has the projectile failed to explode.

But, in spite of all I can do, the secret remains a secret still, and I confess that I begin to believe the chief artillery officers in this region do not know the secret themselves, with perhaps one exception and he knows as well as any man when to speak frankly and when to say frankly that he declines to speak. One of the advantages of the new fuze, which is an oblong brass box, not unlike a Martini drawn cartridge, but shorter, and of course with a thread turned on it, is that it can be screwed in and out of a shell twenty or thirty times without the slightest danger. I dare say, however, though I have failed, that Sir Collingwood Dickson, at Stamboul, knows all about this new fuze; and if so, I commend its consideration to

my friends at Shoeburyness, among whom the use of Palliser projectiles without fuzes may have recently begot certain heresies on the subject.

Such a fuze would have saved us the lives of several men who were killed by the bursting of some shells on the day of the battle of Kizil Tépé, and it would have saved the Russians a couple of explosions, one yesterday at Gumri, and another in the middle of their camp early to-day. We could see them both, but we heard the report of neither ; and therefore I cannot say whether they have inflicted any loss of life, nor, indeed, absolutely that they were not some of those curious signals with which the enemy have the reputation of always trying experiments, that never seem to come to anything. But the smoke was almost certainly, both yesterday and to-day, that of shells bursting, and to-day it was not only one which, as the French say, "leaped."

On our part this morning, not very early, but about a fair time for a London man's breakfast, some twenty-five of our Tcherkesses were ranging along our front near Utch Tépé, escorting one of their own lieutenant-colonels—a cousin, indeed, of Mehemet Ghazi Pacha, Prince of Leshgie—who was having a look at the enemy. I suppose they must have been somewhat careless in their movements, for they had no vedettes out, so far as I can learn. But suddenly from out of a ravine dashed a whole squadron of Russian dragoons at them. For a minute or two the firing was very brisk, and before our men fell back, as they had no option but to do, they had stretched at least four of the Muscovites on the grass. Our loss consisted of one man with a skin wound in the leg, and Colonel Said Bey, who was shot through the left lung, the bullet passing through the sternum.

September 11.—Bathed in the golden mists of dawn, our

plain this morning was one of the loveliest scenes conceivable. The towering Ararat and the multi-peaked Alaghez, the long ridge connecting them and the Caucasus, blue, grey, and yellow in the first flush of sunlight—hang those Russians, it is impossible to get sentimental in their presence! There they are firing a salute or something to-day because it is the *fête* of the Czarewitch, who, if we are not here misinformed, had another kind of salute at Rustchuk a few days since. At first we thought it was another explosion, but the regularity of the puffs of smoke and their number soon told the true tale.

Well, as I was saying—or rather beginning to try to say, when that grey smoke began to hide the thin line of Russian tents, already half veiled in a bank of blue fume drifting in the matin calm from the breakfast fires—the camp of the enemy has apparently been weakened in the course of the last forty-eight hours. It is as long as ever, but very far from as deep; and as there seems no reason to suppose they are bent on any enterprise of their own, it seems probable their lines here have been weakened for the purpose of strengthening their little column at Ardahan. I need hardly say that if this has been done to any great extent we shall at once advance. But possibly our eyes may deceive us, and the camp of the enemy will have to be examined more closely before we can act on such an assumption as the weakening of the line between Kuruk Dara, or Déré, and Utch Tépé.

There is nothing else in the military way fresh this morning. By the powers! there's another Czarewitch salute from Kuruk Déré, thereby kindly showing us on which side of the hill not to attack. But a couple of camp incidents may not be unreadable. And first, by way of celebrating the *fête* of the heir apparent of Russia, we have the chief of

the Koords in the Erivan district put in an appearance here this morning, as he has resolved for the future to cast in his lot with the Osmanlis. He is the head of some 6,000 families in the south of Russian Armenia, and was of so much importance in the service of the enemy that he commanded their irregular cavalry in the ill-considered and hapless advance on Sewin.

I hope, as the Mushir has decorated him, that he is not playing us a trick such as our head-quarters' camp commandant here played the Russians not long ago. He went over to their camp in the morning prime, and gave himself out as a deserter from the Turks. Melikoff took him in and made much of him, promised him much in the way of promotion in the Czar's service, discussed with him all the military positions, gave him incidentally a good deal of information, and finally fell beautifully into a trap laid for him by the Turkish captain.

The latter proposed that he should return to the Ottoman camp as if he had been merely "out for the day," and re-desert in the course of the next evening, stealing and bringing with him to Melikoff the sacred standard of the Tcherkesses. Incredible as it may appear, I have it on the authority of this *yuz-bashi* that the Russian commander-in-chief in Asia jumped at the offer, gave the Turk money, promised him a position on his staff and a decoration if he succeeded in his theft, and sent him off loaded with compliments.

I need hardly say his Armenian countship is still waiting for the Tcherkess standard, and is not unlikely to go without it for some time. The laugh is with us now. It would be a pity if the Koord chief of Erivan were to return to Melikoff in the course of the day with his decoration, and so change the joke against us. That would be a very pretty

Roland for our Oliver ; but I have heard something about an oath by the Beard of the Prophet, and, of course, that settles the question of the new-comer's new fidelity.

Hadji Redschid Pacha's return from Erzeroum, where Faizy Pacha—who I fear does not go back to Kars, or even to active service at all—is conducting the preliminary inquiry into what is familiarly called among Turkish soldiers "the treason of Ardahan," gives us back our chief of the first division, and what I may venture to call general manager of the whole camp. Since his arrival he has been almost perpetually closeted during the day with his brother-in-law, the Mushir ; and when the time for fighting comes the jolly pilgrim will command at a main point, you may depend upon it.

Omer Pacha has arrived from Baghdad, and taken over the second division. He is by birth a Courlander, I believe ; and thus, of our generals of division here, one is a Russian, while of our generals of brigade one, Moussa Pacha, is also a Russian, and one, "Captain" Mehemet Pacha, a Prussian Pole. I may add that a colonel of our Tcherkesses has occupied the same rank in the Russian army, and the Koord who came in to-day has been a general of brigade with local rank in the forces of the Czar, and will doubtless have the same grade continued to him. Several of the young staff officers here, and notably Danielo Bey, have also received their military education at the expense of the Russian nation—of course when Russia had not forgotten that ordinary international courtesy was due to Turkey.

September 5, Evening.—There is no news save of a cavalry reconnaissance yesterday which penetrated in the direction I have indicated as weak ; that is, to the south and east of Utch Tépé, and went along the Arpa to the north for an

hour, until it attracted the attention of the Russians, who tried to cut it off. There was then a few minutes' firing, but the venerable Ali Pacha managed to draw off his forces without loss. I regret the venture, as it may open the eyes of the enemy to their vulnerable point; but in any case the conviction of the whole camp is that we shall have another big battle this week, which must drive us back to the Soghanly Dagħ or set us forward to Gumri.

To-day Dr. Casson, at the request of the Mushir, has been examining the Turkish sanitary arrangements, and pronounces them vile. His excellency has consequently given our countryman the position of sanitary adviser as well as surgeon-in-chief of the camp, and I cannot but augur good results from this appointment.

September 12.—The expedition of Mahr Ali has been so successful, and has put the Russians so completely on the *qui vive*, that, if only by way of continuing to interest them, the Mushir has commenced a system of cavalry attacks on their flanks and rear which will keep them restless enough until the great movement from the northward shows some results. Yesterday a number of our cavalry, regular and irregular, went round the left flank of the enemy and penetrated several miles into Russia, having in the course of the evening a smart brush with the Cossacks, who were sent to the right about, and who failed to prevent the progress of our fellows, whose turn it is to utterly despise their enemy save only when he has field guns with him.

It would appear that the skirmish of yesterday led the Russian head-quarters to believe that we had parted with all our cavalry upon these stinging expeditions, and their spies may even have told them, what was the truth, that in the main cavalry camp of our right there were only thirty horses left at the picket ropes last night. But appearances

in war time are invariably deceitful ; and when the enemy acted this morning upon his information of over night, he found that the rule had not in this instance an exception. Last night the weather was terrible—cold to the point of chilling one's very marrow, while "the rain it came down in such sheets as would stagger a bard for a simile short of Niagara." And this morning Ararat and Alaghez were invisible. Alagsdagh, behind us, was tipped with snow and coated in grey clouds, which lowered even until they almost—in some places quite—touched the tops of our tents, most of which failed to keep out the downpour ; while the wind blew a hurricane, and it needed in some parts of the camp, where the earth lies thin, continual industry during the night to prevent the tent-pegs from drawing.

It was just the sort of morning, in fact, to favour a Russian surprise, and that surprise was accordingly attempted. It not merely failed—it failed ignominiously. It never had a chance. We were not so denuded of cavalry as not to have enough to receive with the proper honours a visit from the other side ; and when, tardily enough, the morning dawned, and the light forced its way through the mist, the enemy found not only that we had nearly as many horse on the ground as he had, but that we were prepared for him in every other way.

It was half-past six o'clock, or a little later, when the alarm was given, and still it was so dark that it was impossible to make out the enemy's force. But in such a case, the only thing to be done is to make sure ; and accordingly all our first line of men on the right, and all the artillery belonging to that flank, were sent out, while the centre held itself in readiness to act. Still the rain came down in floods, still the wind drove it into every nook and crevice of the uniforms of the poor soldiers, who

were soon drenched, and still the clouds lay heavily over the scene, rendering it difficult to make out anything, for now and again they would lift for an instant, only to close again before a glass could be brought to bear steadily on the point.

However, in time, it became pretty apparent that the enemy had at least a division of infantry, and six regiments of cavalry on his left of Utch Tépé, and that his skirmishers and some of his guns had advanced as far as a ridge which runs out by the village of Djala. At this time Djala was held by a few of our Koords. Like most of the villages between the two armies, it was deserted, but one man staying in it. The Russians advanced against the village, and the outposts naturally retired before them. But this man remained. Of his fate you shall hear anon.

The Mushir, who with General Kemball, and the head-quarter staff stood near the village of Kerchané, a little to the right of it—a capital point for seeing everything and directing any necessary movement such as might be induced by the operations of the enemy. Indeed, there is nothing more certain than that, if the weather had cleared up, we should have had a battle all along the line, for the point at which the Russians aimed we knew to be impregnable even if held by a small force. We knew where one Russian division was, and it stood to reason that the moment was favourable for an advance on their main camp by the Kizil Tépé troops.

But on such a day real fighting was out of the question, and I consider a wiser discretion was never exercised by a general than when the Mushir forbore to send his men on such an errand. Thus the combat was limited to the Russian skirmishers sent out by their division stationed on the ridge beyond Djala, to their cavalry, which showed

singularly little enterprise, to their artillery on Utch Tépé and near Djala, to our advanced artillery on the right centre, and to our irregular cavalry.

Dr. Casson, with his colleague, took one of the telegraph wagons, by way of ambulance, towards Djala, and when after a couple of hours' firing the enemy fell back, they entered the village with our Koords. There a horrible sight met their eyes. The poor peasant who had foolishly remained in the village was found by these English medical gentlemen and Baron Schluga, of the *Neue Freie Presse*, with his head nearly cut off, the severance beginning at the back, and only the front of the throat holding together. His left arm was chopped into pieces up to the elbow, the right arm was chopped off at the wrist, each of the fingers of the right hand was separately taken off, and they were strewn about the ground, one of them being six or seven feet from the body, which was stabbed in gaping wounds in half a dozen places.

What the offence of the poor creature had been we of course cannot tell, but whatever it was, nothing can excuse such barbarity. If Messrs. Freeman and MacColl will not take my word for this atrocity, I refer them to the gentlemen whom I have named, who carefully examined the body, and are prepared to vouch for this latest example of the tender mercies of the Muscovite civilizers.

By nine o'clock all was over except a little artillery fire, in which Kizil Tépé joined towards the last, and our loss was ten killed and seventeen wounded, one of whom has since died. I can form no idea of the extent to which the Russians suffered, but some sixty top-coats were taken as prize by our cavalry. One of these, putting on a Russian coat and drawing the hood over his head, was fired upon by his own squadron as he returned to his regiment, and wounded in the knee.

In respect of atrocities, I have another piece of news for Messrs. Freeman and Company. There is daily skirmishing between the force of Ismail Pacha and Tergukasoff, and an English officer who is now with Mushir Ismail, writes to me that he has himself seen, after a skirmish on the 27th of August, how the Turkish dead were mutilated on the field of battle by the Cossacks. I commend the fact to the veracious Mr. MacColl, who has, I see, been again holding forth on the atrocities of the Turks, that on our right Mussulmans get no quarter at the hands of Mr. MacColl's humane allies, who are assisted in murdering the wounded by their Armenian friends on both sides of the frontier.

"All Koordistan is coming to the front," says my gallant correspondent; and as I know from another source as well as from him that, as was mentioned in my last, Ismail has thirty-eight battalions, besides plenty of guns and cavalry, I agree with my friend, that "there is really no excuse now for not making a stroke at Erivan."

September 16.—There was quite a panic yesterday in Kars. Reis Ahmed Pacha was out at this camp, and Hussein Bey was in command of the fortress. About nine a.m., a telegram was received from the front that a column of Russians, which turned out to be really some Turkish cavalry, were advancing from the direction of Zaim. There were not above four battalions and four or five squadrons in garrison, and of course, if the Russians had been going to Kars in force, these would have been nowhere on such a line of parapet. So the alarm was given, the town criers patrolled the streets, shouting exhortations to the population to repair to the forts. Accordingly, about ten o'clock all the shops were shut, in and out of the bazaar, and the people repaired *en masse* to the parapets, where, I

take it, they would have been about as formidable against trained soldiers as a yard full of chickens in the presence of a couple of hawks.

The winter has fairly begun, though to-day we are enjoying a sort of "Indian summer." Snow lies deep on the lower mountains; in another month it may have reached the plain. But they talk now of prolonging military operations till the third week in November, when what people here call real cold, that is, some thirty degrees of frost, may be expected to set in.

CHAPTER XVII.

NEAR KERCHANÉ, *September 18.*—Yesterday morning we had a little skirmish, in which, almost for the first time for three months, our troops suffered a check. The fact is, that one regiment of cavalry and a few squadrons of irregulars were making a reconnaissance in the direction of the road from Kars to Gumri, when they were set upon by three regiments of Russian dragoons. Naturally they fell back, not at once towards the camp, in which case they would have got off without loss, but in a semi-circle, and in the course of half an hour they had half a dozen wounded.

By this movement they got, about nine a.m., under cover of the guns of our advanced batteries at and near Kizil Tépé, "Captain" Mehemet Pacha throwing out at the same time two battalions and two light guns. Directly these came in sight the Russian brigadier recognised that the better part of valour is discretion—a point which the Turkish binbashi had forgotten—and prudently retired. The whole thing occupied less than an hour, and the artillery fire did not last more than half that time, so that the affair was hardly worth even the few lines I have devoted to it.

Last night we had joy in camp. The news of the second battle of Plevna and its result arrived just as Alaghez had put on his nightcap, and Ararat was in his last stage of golden glory; in other words, at sunset. At first it was but a private message from telegraph clerk to telegraph clerk, in one of the rare intervals when the wire was idle; but it soon spread all over head-quarters, and thence,

before long, over the whole camp, whence during the early hours of the night would ever and anon come bursts of cheering. It was not long before an official telegram confirmed the intelligence, not only that the Russians had been worsted in their long and carefully prepared attack on Osman Pacha's position, but that they had been repulsed in a decisive manner.

And now I will give you an incident that will corroborate the statements made before respecting Armenian objection to Russian success. Among the radiant faces near the Mushir's tent was none brighter than that of my Armenian servant. He was throwing up his fez and dancing with delight. I said to him, "How is this, Christopher, when you are one of the oppressed race that the Russians are seeking to deliver?" He did not understand. Then I asked him if he did not want the Russians to succeed. He replied that the afore-said Russians were "*chok fana*"—that is, as bad as bad could be; that though an Armenian, he was an Osmanli; that no true Armenian wished success to the Russians; and that one of the principal grounds of their dislike to the Czar and his children, was the certainty of having to serve as soldiers in the Russian army, it might be thousands of miles from their beloved though most unattractive homes.

I have yet to meet the Armenian peasant who took a different view, though there is no doubt that a vast number of what we should call the middle classes—that is, traders of one kind and another—are philo-Russian in sentiment, while some of them are beyond question paid agents of the Muscovites. And more than once since I have been on the frontier I have noticed, merely as a straw showing how the current sets, the curious way in which these Armenian traders prefer to deal in Russian goods.

At Erzeroum the Germans, the French, the Austrians, and the English have their share of the markets. But at Kars nearly everything is Russian. Thus only Russian toilet soap can be bought, good, but dear; only Russian china, costly, and tawdry, and bad; chiefly Russian glass and delf, dear and tasteless; Russian cutlery, rude and bad in the extreme; German needles, with labels imitating those of England, even to the Royal arms, and supplied by Russian commission agents; Russian paper, envelopes, cotton prints, carpenters' tools; indeed, the whole *omnium gatherum* of the ordinary bazaar is nine-tenths of Russian origin or from Russian agency. The Muscovs could not have the command of the local markets more completely than they have if Kars were a Russian province. I learn that it is the same thing at Batoum and at Bayazid.

Already, then, the Russians have established a trade route in Turkey competing with that between Trebizond and Bayazid by way of Erzeroum, and if they only had the control of all that route, not only would Erzeroum be impoverished, but French sugar and candles, English calicoes, Austrian tools and cutlery, and the other things which now follow the old caravan road, would be shut out from the North Persian markets altogether, and replaced by the vile Russian rubbish that even now is forced on the inhabitants of this district by the Armenian shopkeepers, who have the monopoly of the import trade.

So far afield has the battle of Plevna led me; but the two things have a more intimate connection than might appear to the casual reader. For if Turkey were beaten in the European campaign she would make her own terms with her adversary, and though I doubt whether she would have ceded a foot of this Armenian territory, she might have made to her foe such special

concessions as would have amounted to the grant of a trade monopoly throughout the whole province. The valour of the Turkish troops, and the boldness and prudence of their generals, has averted for the present that contingency; but do not let England assume that the danger will not return, and commerce is the road to empire.

Where the Muscovite merchants establish themselves, there sooner or later will the Muscovite generals follow. Russianization can be effected by a subsidised trade just as well as by military columns, and I only hope that before it is too late some of these facts may find themselves forced upon the serious attention of the English public. The people hereabouts have no notion that it is the best things which are in the end best worth buying. They know nothing of quality, but they are tempted by inferior prices, and above all, by what they have been in the habit of using or what they see their neighbours do.

Thus it is positively necessary that the general officers here should force their more severely wounded men to accept the services of the English surgeons who have established a hospital "for wounded only" on a bluff in the rear of the Mushir's tent. And this disinclination is not confined to the privates—it extends into the higher ranks. The other day a cousin of Schamyl, a colonel, was shot through the left lung. It was a wound that, under the best treatment in the world, was extremely dangerous; and Dr. Casson was sent by the Mushir to attend to it. For three days all went as well as could be expected. On the morning of the fourth day the wounded man sent a message by Mehemet Ghazi Pacha's secretary, that he had placed himself in the hands of a Circassian doctor—one of the class who, "with woven paces and with waving hands" perform incantations and practise sorcery for all the ailments

to which flesh is heir. It is not surprising to hear this colonel is dead. Another cousin of Schamyl, an adjutant-major, was a week ago wounded in the arm. The bullet passed into the articulation of the right elbow, crushed up the bone and lodged itself in the joint in the shape of a button mushroom. It was an affair of fifty minutes under chloroform to get it out, even with the best English surgery. But until he was forced to the hospital by the orders of his general, this officer was perfectly content to leave himself in the hands of the native hakim and magician, whom the English doctors found engaged upon the hopeful task of sucking out the ounce of lead.

As in this, so in all. The six wounded in the skirmish of yesterday with one accord placed themselves under the doctors of the Turkish hospital, who most atrociously neglect their patients. Thus one poor fellow in Kars the other day was suffering from tetanus, his teeth being clenched and his breast arched, yet for a whole hour the Turkish doctors stood by chattering and even laughing at the poor devil, till a German surgeon came up. Men are left for twenty-four hours at a time without a visit even when badly wounded; but all this is submitted to rather than undergo the novel experience of being treated with science, skill, and care.

In the absence of war news to-day, here is a morsel of trustworthy political information which is sure to be "kept dark" for the present at Stamboul. Whatever may be the issue of this war, Turkey proposes to abolish what are called the "capitulations," that is to say, the concessions made to the European Powers of a concurrent and, sometimes even a separate jurisdiction in cases, civil or criminal, affecting the subjects of foreign States. Many of the most eminent statesmen of Turkey have long felt it to be intolerable that their country should be subject to such an

exceptional intervention in the ordinary course of municipal justice, and though up till now it has been tolerated, this has been only because it has been recognised that the Western Powers had reason to be somewhat suspicious of ordinary fair play before many of the Turkish tribunals. But when, as a complement of the new Constitution, a new code, civil as well as penal, has been promulgated, and judges appointed, as provided by Midhat's famous instrument, the Turkish Government is resolved that, at any cost, the exceptional privileges accorded to foreigners shall cease, due notice of course being given to the various Governments concerned.

It is not my business to express any opinion upon such a point, but I may say that even with all the pressure of war affairs on hand, the attention of the Porte has recently been directed to the way in which certain members of the consular body have in the last few months exercised their authority and their influence, and the decision which I communicate to you has been in consequence taken. It will be denied at Constantinople for the present, I have no doubt, but it has been resolved as I have said, and the resolution will be enforced even at the cost of a war.

These privileges, the Turks say, were granted in return for certain stipulations of protection and assistance in case of necessity. Those stipulations have been treated as idle words by the Powers generally. What is more natural, they add, than that the price paid should be recalled as soon as the bargain has ceased to be operative? And if Turkey is an independent Power, as the prowess of her armies seems to prove, what answer there is to this Ottoman view of the case, I have not yet been able to discover.

September 21.—On Monday night we heard a rumour, and on Tuesday evening we had a report, that the Russian

force opposite to us had not only really passed from the command of General Count Loris Melikoff to that of the Grand Duke Michael in person, but that it was in course of receiving the reinforcement of a whole division, the first of the Russian Grenadiers, amounting to some 12,000 men, with forty-eight guns.

As I have said before, this brings, the centre camps of the Russians up to about 33,000 men and 168 pieces of artillery, and with such a force they should not be inactive. But they continue to make no sign, even by a party of cavalry along our front. The truth is, I suspect, that all the division has not come up, and I, for one, doubt much movement when it has fully arrived. I deemed the battle of Kizil Tépé, or Guedikler, decisive; and although we have not followed it up as, in my judgment, we should have done the very next morning, it has been so far decisive that four weeks have now elapsed without any attempt on the part of the invaders to try conclusions with us afresh.

On the other hand, the reasons against our moving, to which I have more than once referred, remain in full force, and we wait for the advance of Koord Ismail Pacha and the completion of the movement to the northward. But for some reason or other, we have no news of any progress by the former, and the latter appears to be suspended for the moment, though no check whatever has been sustained. Indeed, we learn through spies and an intercepted letter, that the Russian colonel commanding on our north has received orders to evacuate Ardahan; but that is hardly possible for the moment, as he is not yet pressed.

It is impossible to say what a day may bring forth; but all looks as if both sides would not be ill-content to "fight it out on this line all the winter." The balance is now held to be even. If the Russians are on Turkish territory

at Ardahan and in front of Gumri, the Turks are on Russian territory near Igdir and Etchmiadzin. And as a serious struggle has been so long deferred, it would not now surprise me if, reinforcements to the contrary notwithstanding, the battle were put off indefinitely. Still, in Asia as in Europe, it would seem that something must be done to save the honour of the Russian arms.

But as I sit and write in this beautiful autumn weather at the door of my tent, and survey the terrain for fifty miles in one direction by a hundred in another, or as I pore over my Turkish lithographed, and therefore somewhat blurred, staff map of the Russian frontier and the Caucasus, I fail to make out our weak point, unless it be on our right and right rear. Perhaps the Grand Duke Michael may be more fortunate ; but, however well served he may be by spies, he cannot know all that we know of the resources of this position and its capacity for defence.

I mentioned that we have had for some weeks only seventy-two guns. That figure is now increased by a certain number of pieces of position, placed near Kizil Tépé. Yesterday we fired a salute from six different points of our front in honour of the Turkish third victory at Plevna ; but if the enemy expects to find six batteries at the places from which the salute was fired, he will drop into an error that might not be trivial in its consequences.

It is not pleasant in the interests of English journalism, with which it has been my pride to be connected for nearly twenty years, to say that an English correspondent has to-day been dismissed, and I must say justly dismissed, from both the camp and the province. In a London journal of August 27th appeared a long and most monstrous libel upon Turkish generals, and Moukhtar Pacha in particular, from the pen of a special correspondent, who was

not even an Englishman. Like many other letters from the same source, this particular letter was offensive in its assumptions of intimacy with the commander-in-chief, and more especially in the absolute fancifulness, if I may be allowed the suggestive expression, of its details of movements.

The foreigner who wrote it is an old Continental journalist, but age in his case has not brought discretion. Whether he acted on the principle that "it's a far cry to Loch Awe," and believed he could fill a column or two with such libellous matter without being found out, and with the hope of pleasing the groundlings, it is not for me to say; it is enough that the relations of Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha with journalists and with his army have been systematically distorted by this writer in assumed protection of the interests of Faizy Pacha and other foreign officers with whom he happened to have a speaking acquaintance.

Moreover, his descriptions of battles have been always, with one exception, at second-hand, and his infirmity of almost total deafness has disqualified him from acquiring any information, save through the medium of a dragoman, of whom I will not say more than that he was absolutely unfit for the place. More than once he has foisted on his journal letters and telegrams which had not even the merit of antecedent probability, dated from places where he was not. Such conduct no regular English journalist could possibly have been guilty of, and I should be sorry to think that any foreign *confrère* absolutely responsible for his actions was responsible for such unjust and unprovoked attacks. But after all that has occurred, and such letters as his have not been unnoted by the authorities, and after hesitating on the brink of expelling him more than once, the Mushir has

at length taken that step consequent on a series of equivocations such as Englishmen would be ashamed of.

After the measure dealt out by the Porte to Captain Norman of *The Times*,—hard measure, as I have before written, if not unjustified,—it would have been strange, indeed, had such purely imaginative, though persistently malicious, allegations as those of this correspondent been passed over without notice.

Personally, Moukhtar Pacha could have passed them by with contempt; and I do not think there can be any more striking comment upon the writer's allegation of the Mushir's want of capacity than the fact that, while his letter appears in the fourth and fifth columns of the fifth page of the publication of the 27th, there is in the third column of the same page a brief notice of the grand victory gained on the 25th, both in line and against a Russian fortification, by this alleged "incapable," whose strategy and tactics have been for weeks made the butt of this querulous and infirm ex-German publicist.

I will stand by my order as much as any man in the world; but the line must be drawn somewhere, and I draw it at a foreigner representing a great English newspaper, and doing his best to bring it and English journalism generally into contempt.

With reference to the assertions of the honorary secretary of the Stafford House Committee, that medical stores had been long ago here, I beg to repeat, and I do so on the authority of the commander-in-chief, of General Kemball, of Dr. Casson, and of my own eyesight, that no Stafford House or other English stores reached our corps until the 1st September, when some were brought by Drs. Casson and Buckby, two of Lord Blantyre's surgeons, who accompanied, not English stores at all, but a few stores bought in Stamboul, it is true by Stafford House money. That

the Stafford House Committee has done wonders I know, and that the muddle is due to Ahmed Vefyk Pacha and his friend, a Turk-courting legislator, I am also aware. But let the Society get credit for what it has done, and not for what it has not done, and it has not done what its honorary secretary has now twice averred it has done. If he ignores, I do not forget, the terrible scenes of the last four months, many of which might have been averted if an English agent, such as Mr. Kennett, had been put in charge at Constantinople at the first.

Messieurs the Tcherkesses have not, it seems, been treated in this campaign as they may have desired. Few if any of them have been made field-m Marshals, and indeed few of them have shown themselves worthy of being made lance-corporals, or "on bashis," meaning heads of ten. A scurvy, untrustworthy, grumbling, thieving, and more or less cowardly crew, the ruck of the Circassians have been throughout hardly less of a nuisance than the Koords. A few troops of them have done much to restore the fair fame of this once warlike race; but they have been, indeed, only a sprinkling. And now the rest, injured creatures as they are, have more or less resolved to shake off the dust of their feet and leave Moukhtar's inappreciative camp. Some of them have already gone.

A fortnight ago I was sitting with Reis Ahmed Pacha in Kars, when a few of the chiefs of these interesting soldiers claimed audience, and explained why they wanted to go. Instead of having one or two of them shot for threatening to desert in the face of an enemy, his excellency, who does not lack sternness when he wishes to show it, smiled upon these cowards and parleyed with them in, to me, the most aggravating manner. And now they threaten to go, and are going. If they fancy anybody here will miss

them other than pleurably, they are mistaken ; but as they have had lands given to them in several parts of Turkey on condition of military service in the field when they are called upon, they must not be surprised if they find the Turkish Government insists upon its side of the contract being fulfilled, or the valuable consideration returned.

There has been throughout the campaign a distressing want of firmness shown in dealing with these fellows, who have assumed to themselves a quite exceptional importance, which they have done nothing to earn. No single nizam or redif has done less to win credit or renown, and though we should all be very sorry if the truly excellent minority of the tribes were to leave us, of which, being real soldiers, there is of course no chance, for the rest the verdict of every good judge here will, on their departure, be a good riddance. I may say the same of the Polish legion, which has to-day, I am glad to say, departed also.

Delicate beings that they were, they had engaged for service on the Danube, and they objected to continue in Asia. The Mushir has had no difficulty in dispensing with the aid of these lacqueys out of place, adventurous *garçons de restaurant*, *chevaliers d'industrie* out of luck, and polyglot ne'er-do-weels of slippery conduct, who have sought here to represent the cause of Poland, and have never spent a day since their arrival without a grumble, or a week without a threatened mutiny, which they lacked the pluck to execute.

If they do get to Widdin, I hope my colleagues with the army in Europe will have a good eye to portable property should these patriots be found in the neighbourhood. One of them actually sold to my servant to-day, before they left, a shoebrush, which I found afterwards, by a private mark, was stolen out of my tent nearly a month ago.

CHAPTER XVIII.

September 24.—To-day we enter upon the sixth month of the war, and to-day we have made a computation of our losses and gains during the five months that have gone by. In Asia we have lost, besides from 700 to 800 men dead from disease or invalided, 7,500 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners. The figure appears small in comparison with the great results achieved, and with the number of men put *hors de combat* on the one side or the other in a single battle in Europe; but I have reason to believe it is very close to the mark, and that if it errs at all, the error is less than ten per cent. For I have kept a private "tot" throughout the campaign, and I make the loss only 6,100, while I have also analysed the figures upon which the account above stated is founded, and I see no margin for error.

The same calculation, however, makes the Russian loss in Asia 19,150, and I am inclined to reckon this by about twenty per cent. an exaggeration, although it includes only 1,000 for the Russian retreat from Helias to Igdyr, a number which of itself at once disposes of Ismail Pacha's purely fanciful telegrams from the neighbourhood of Kara Kilissa and Utch Kilissa. Without going into wearisome details, which would be in most respects only a reiteration of old information, I may say that my own calculation makes the Russian loss, apart from sick, rather over 16,500. In other words, the Russian division now in course of arrival does not replace the actual loss in killed and wounded since Loris Melikoff entered Turkish Armenia;

and if we take into account the sick known to have been sent to the rear, it is doubtful whether the division of Grenadiers will bring the forces of the enemy up to their original strength. But another division is expected by Melikoff immediately.

At length there seems a prospect of something more stirring than I have had to recount during the last month. But before I begin to tell the story of the last few days, let me briefly recapitulate our positions in Asia. Dervish Pacha is, in spite of orders, content to hold his own at Batoum. Our movement on Ardahan from three points has as yet resulted in nothing, and the fact that the Mushir is not altogether satisfied with the way things have been conducted in that quarter may be inferred from his having sent an officer of position there a few days ago to bring him a specific report of the situation.

Here we still hold the triangle from Kars by Yahnilar to Kizil Tépé, and thence, by Djala to Anni, and the enemy is still facing us, with his flanks covered by Karayal and Kuruk Déré on one side and Utch Tépé on the other. We have three battalions and a few guns at Nadjivan on the road to Kaghisman, and a detachment of cavalry at Guler-sike, just north of Lake Balikli and on Russian territory, whence they retired from Kulp, or Kulap, which has now a small Russian force in it. Koord Ismail Pacha is still near Igdyr, doing little beyond occupying the road from Bayazid to Erivan and an advanced western spur of Ararat to the westward of that road. It will thus be seen that there is very little change in our position, but still things begin to look more lively.

On Friday, at midnight, the whole camp was put on the *qui vive* by a brisk interchange of musketry on the east front, in the direction of Utch Tépé; and as the moon was

all but full, the idea was that the Russians, frequently foiled in the daytime, were going to try the perilous experiment of a night attack. However, when our advance post fell back, the enemy did not follow, and the rest of the night passed in peace. Yesterday in the afternoon it became evident that the camp opposite was disturbed by something. Presently the Mushir found, by the simple expedient of looking, that the enemy was throwing out from his centre camp near Orta a column with a train. This column consisted of seven battalions of infantry, two batteries of artillery, or sixteen guns, and some cavalry.

Whither was it bound? We had not long to wait to see. It settled for the night at Koshevank, to the east of Utch Tépé, and on the Russian side of the Arpa river, at a point where an easy ford exists, and close to the place to which the Russians removed their left a month ago when they departed from Anni. But this settlement solved no problem except the one whether the alleged reinforcements had really arrived, and on that point the appearance of the enemy's lines for some days had practically left no doubt. Was our right or right front threatened? If so, the force was most inadequate to do us the slightest injury, and therefore, beyond strengthening the battalions already near Anni by eight companies from our centre, we "let things slide."

The sun sank in a golden glow over Kars, the western heavens presenting such a scene of magnificence as in or out of the tropics I have never before witnessed. A sea of translucent azure fading into grey, and flecked with innumerable islets of lustrous gold, presently changed into . . . the most intensely luminous carmine, and then died into a ruddy slate colour. "Shall we ever again see such a glorious thing on this side of heaven?" said one of my medical friends, as we were called away to dinner. Yes,

and we saw it as we turned towards beautiful Alaghez, behind which the nearly full moon was just rising bathed in an ocean of green and gold and grey, with brown and red wave lines. "Who could dare to paint such a scene?" said one. "What a background for Beverley, or Callcott, or O'Connor!" cried another, and as we yet lingered the light passed away both from Alaghez and Ararat, and we could no longer resist the cravings of an appetite sharpened by mountain air and eight hours without food.

At three o'clock this morning I was awoke by a rifle shot, far away, it is true, but clearly enough in the direction of the Russian detachment across the Arpa. The moon had worked now round to our rear, and one could barely make out the outline of the hills that stud our now familiar plan. But plainly enough could be seen the flashing of many Winchesters to the south and east of Utch Tépé, and very plainly could be heard the louder crack of the Berdan carbines in reply. Looking at our watches to note the hour, it is not surprising that every one should have jumped to the conclusion that here was the beginning of the long expected and probably last struggle of the season. Hastily pulling on my boots and ordering my horse, I went towards the Mushir's tent to learn his probable movements. Not a movement, not a sound!

Then I heard from the aide-de-camp on duty that orders had been given that none of the generals should be disturbed on account of casual musketry fire unless a preconcerted signal were given from certain points on the front. And as we spoke and lit each a cigarette the firing died away, and I fell back towards my canvas home. Hardly had I reached it when there came a signal from Kizil Tépé, followed immediately by a second. At once the whole head-quarters was alive, for the bugle sang truce to fur-

ther slumbers, though it was as yet but half-past four. Presently came a telegram from the same point that the enemy was moving a column along his front, but was not approaching our lines.

Bright though the moon still was, her rays were yet not enough to show us what the Russians were really doing. But it was evident we had not long to wait for this. An ever-widening though at first tiny arch of light peeped over the skyline of Alaghez. Faintly gold and faintly blue, with here and there a dainty little line of vermilion, it grew ere long into a glorious arch of more than all the hues of the rainbow, and as it enlarged the heavy head of Ararat crept out of the dim distance. Before one had time to feel that one was but half awake, and half dreaming of these celestial splendours, it was full day. The cavalry outposts of the enemy and ours began again to fire at one another.

It would be trifling with my readers to suppose that any of them imagine anybody was likely to be hurt by this sort of rifle practice, and, as a matter of fact, though it kept on for an hour, nothing was touched but a poor horse, and he was only grazed. It is said there were three killed on the Russian side. That is always the story of our sweet irregulars when they think nobody is looking. But, as a matter of fact, there was nobody hit at all, and the whole affair is only worthy of notice for this reason: It became evident while this desultory fire was going on, by the retirement of some strong bodies of the enemy towards their camp, that only the vigilance of our cavalry in the early morning had prevented a surprise. The intentions of the enemy were most excellent. Three o'clock was a very good hour to begin a big battle. But this little element in the calculation was forgotten: that though our rear and flanks are absurdly open, our advanced front never sleeps. And

so the great fight was once more postponed. Moreover, while we looked at the retiring body of the enemy, some of us found that the camp of last night on the Arpa was broken up, and the seven battalions gone—whither?

On our side one of the most encouraging signs of vitality is, that for a considerable period of to-day "Captain" Mehemet Pacha has been closely closeted with the Mushir, and the experts in the signs of the *quartier-général* say that never happens but when fighting is meant. Moreover, the commander-in-chief took the English hospital by surprise this morning by an early visit, and was pleased to express to Dr. Casson his satisfaction that all was ready, while he thanked him and his colleagues in the name of the army for the services they are rendering to the poor soldiers, who are all doing well under their care.

September 25.—The missing Russian detachment was reported last night, when it found itself *vis-à-vis* with our three battalions to the south, and this morning it is still on its own side of the river. Perhaps the intention is to try and turn our right. The attempt will need more than seven battalions. But then a Grand Duke must do something to make believe to be much cleverer than a mere Melikoff, who, it seems, has been blamed for exceeding the powers confided to him. In other words, he is said to be the coming scapegoat of the failure to conquer Asia Minor, on the ground that his orders were from the beginning to rest chiefly on the defensive. And so the attack on Batoum, the taking of Ardahan, the siege of Kars, the seizure of Bayazid, the advance of Tergukasoff, were all contrary to the orders, and consequently we must suppose to the wish, of the reigning House of Russia, and that bright particular star of the illustrious family, the Grand Duke Michael. But if this be the case, how did his Imperial Highness

come to take a personal part in some of these enterprises? And if they were against orders, are telegraphs unknown to the Russian army in Asia? The honest truth is, that never was a lamer attempt to shift the responsibility of an ignominious failure. I have not a high opinion of General Count Loris Melikoff; but if he was a weak man,—and he was known to be so ever since he was Commissary of the Armenian frontier when Kars fell in 1855,—why was he placed at the head of the Army of the Caucasus? If he acted against orders, there was not a day of the campaign on which the Grand Duke did not know what the Count was doing, and there were no three days on which he could not have communicated with his inferior by telegraph. But, of course, a Romanoff is impeccable; yet, though his Czarish Majesty's brother has some experience in finding scape-goats, he will have to dance upon his uniform cap a good many times before he will persuade even the Russian public that the blame for the failure up to the present moment of the Armenian campaign rests upon any other than his own exalted shoulders.

The "last rose of summer," the "last words of the dying," the "last of the Mohicans," or of the Barons, "the last days of Pompeii," even the "last dying speech and confession," comic though some of its associations are—all have a plaintive sound, and are associated with mournful memories.

To-day I—*ultimus Romanorum*—am the last of the correspondents with the headquarters of Moukhtar Pacha, for to-day Baron Schluga, of the *Neue Freie Presse*, has taken his departure for the European battle-fields. He will be missed more by me than by any other person (except, perhaps, the Mushir), for it is no exaggeration to say that we are the only two correspondents who have,

in anything like the true meaning of the word, made the campaign of 1877 in Armenia. We have been always at the front, and the opinions of my *confrère* have ever proved sound on questions of tactics, and even of strategy. An experienced Austrian cavalry officer, who has served with distinction on the staff, and who was decorated as long ago as Solferino, Baron Schluga has been in many respects invaluable in this camp, and I cannot allow him to depart without bearing testimony to his many excellent qualities, both of head and heart—as a cultured soldier and a *bon camarade*.

CHAPTER XIX.

KERCHANÉ, *October 5*.—"It never rains, but it pours," and, after nearly six weeks of virtual inaction, we have had from Monday last four days as full of interest as any that have presented themselves since the last days of April, when Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha left Kars to the care of twenty-nine battalions, and the excellent artillery, served under the direction of Colonel Hussein Bey.

In a recent letter, I spoke of an outpost which we have had at Nadjiwan, and which, consisting of three battalions, one battery of Krupps, and three or four brass mountain-pieces, was placed by the commander-in-chief under the charge of Colonel Ali Shefik Bey, an unusually young officer of that rank, which was conferred upon him for brilliant service during the siege of the great Armenian fortress.

Since my last letter, in point of fact, we have had Russian attacks on every hand, and the first of them was delivered at sunrise on Monday, the 1st inst., when the Russian column of seven battalions, two regiments of cavalry, and two batteries, spoken of in my last as then resting for some unknown purpose at or near Koshevank, on the Russian side of the Arpa, attacked, with more *verve* than had hitherto been manifested during this campaign on the side of the invaders, the small hill upon which Ali Shefik had entrenched himself. Simultaneously we had a cavalry and artillery engagement between the village of Djala and Utch Tépé. This skirmish—for it was no more—was brought about by the desire of some of our Leshgians to possess themselves of a rather ragged field of

barley by the village of Arasoghlu, virtually within the Russian outposts—a field of barley too poor to repay reaping, and probably reserved by the Russians as winter fodder. Of course, for such an object, it was hardly necessary to ask formal permission, and I believe nothing was known at our head-quarters of the movement until the firing attracted everybody's attention. It seems that the Leshgians actually penetrated the Russian advance lines, and were engaged in loading their horses with the straw, when they were discovered by a Cossack patrol, which promptly fell back, being outnumbered. It soon returned with reinforcements, and then the Leshgians, putting their ponies to speed, sought shelter in Djala, while a number of their comrades, who had not taken part in the foraging expedition, went out on the Russian flank.

You will understand that I give the story as it was told to me, for although I believe Dr. Casson and myself were on the spot as soon as anybody, the mist of the valley and the drifting smoke of the camp fires of both armies lay heavily along the ground, and even within a mile of the encounter nothing could be seen of it. The usual morning breeze, however, which in these parts ordinarily comes with the sun, soon raised the bank of blue reek, and then I could discern that while our men in open order covered our front from Yahnalik to Anni, the Russian cavalry was more compact, and was further supported by half a brigade of infantry near Arasoghlu, while their artillery was evidently waiting only the word to advance. In a few minutes after I reached the rear of Djala, one battery advanced by divisions, and opened fire upon our Leshgians, who steadily and slowly fell back upon Djala, where the shells began to tumble so quickly, that the deserted hovels afforded only indifferent shelter. Several times the Circassian Colonel

Mehemet Bey turned, as he saw his chance, and inflicted some little loss upon the too compact ranks of the enemy. But by half-past seven the Leshgians were out of range, having lost only one private killed, and, so far as I could find out by a visit to their camp, no more than four wounded; but three of the cases were severe. Leaving Dr. Casson to attend to these wounded, I cantered back to head-quarters, near which I found the Mushir, Redschild Pacha, commanding the 1st Division, and nearly the whole of their staffs, engaged in watching the continued advance of the Russians, who actually entered Djala, and at any moment might have made a serious attack upon our right front. However, when they came within range of one of our redoubts, close to Yahnalik, they were checked, and gradually retired upon Arasoghlu and Utch Tépé.

The commander-in-chief was good enough to take from me a report of the incidents of the skirmish, and, in turn, told me of the attack which had been made by the wandering Russian column upon Nadjivan. A few cavalry, acting as scouts, informed Ali Shefik that the enemy had crossed the river slightly above his position, and had broken up into detachments. As the golden light peeped over the new snow on Alaghez, the Colonel made out that his position was being approached from three points. The enemy advanced bravely, but, as usual, in far too solid form, and made as though they would effect a military promenade over the three Turkish battalions; but the withering fire from our breechloaders, to say nothing of the shells from the Krupps and mountain guns, played such havoc in the serried ranks of the Russians, that they were fain to retire, and commence anew.

The second time they attacked in one column, which, as before, trembled and broke, ere the foremost battalion

could take up skirmishing duty. Yet once more the enemy advanced, this time with more discretion. The whole hillside was covered with their skirmishers, who were well supported by artillery, the Cossacks and dragoons hanging round the base of the hill to cut off any attempt on the part of the Turks to retire from the position. But Ali Shefik had no notion of the kind, and the 75th battalion of the enemy, which actually advanced within thirty paces of our trenches, paid the penalty of its temerity by leaving, I will not say 150 of its men on the slopes of the hill—for even at close quarters like this the Russians carry off their dead—but over 150 kepis, most of which were picked up, and in the course of the day sent to head-quarters by Colonel Ali.

One of the Mushir's aides-de-camp, who happened to be present, estimates the loss of the enemy in the three assaults as 700 killed and wounded. But proof of this assertion seems to be wanting; and if we put those *hors de combat* at from 250 to 300, we shall probably not be far from the mark. I hear also, without quite believing, that three of the Russian guns were left in the bed of the Arpa during the enemy's precipitate retreat. I can only say that they have not been brought into camp.

The behaviour of the three Turkish battalions, whose strength of all ranks cannot have exceeded 1,300 men, was all that could be desired; and I am glad to say that Ali Shefik's loss is reported as eight killed and seventeen wounded, besides a few scratches. When Ali Shefik, two days later, rejoined the main army, he was received by the Mushir with the exclamation, "Hosh geldin!" which is the heartiest form of welcome afforded by the Turkish language, and right well does the young colonel appear to have deserved the approbation of his superior.

In the afternoon in front of head-quarters, seventy-two survivors of the two leading companies that led the way on the 25th August up the bloody slopes of Kizil Tépé, were decorated by the commander-in-chief, with much ceremony, with the medal for conspicuous bravery; and the same evening, on the six divisional parades seven miserable creatures were shot to death, as the crimson glow of sunset lit up the mountain tops, for attempted desertion in the face of the enemy.

During the evening Hadji Redschild Pacha had the band of his division playing at his quarters, and whether it was the strains of the music or a presentiment of what was to come, I cannot tell, but I found it impossible to win sleep upon my straw couch. Towards midnight I heard a few scattered shots in the direction of Subatan, and nothing loth to turn out, I wandered towards the Mushir's tent, but all was quiet there. However, I met one of his excellency's aides-de-camp, who had just returned from a round of the *avant* posts, and to him I pointed out that the Russian camp fires were very much brighter than usual, and that they were built at regular intervals along the front of the centre camp between Utch Tépé and Karajol. In front of Orta, more especially, the fires were particularly large; but my friend assured me that from Kizil Tépé no movement whatever could be discerned, and that some of our cavalry had just reported all quiet in the enemy's lines.

After a cigarette we sought our respective beds, but sleep was still wooed in vain, at least on my part. Restless, I had just lit my candle to try if I could read myself into repose, when there came the distinct sound of a volley from the direction of Utch Tépé. To this volley there was no response. Had there been a few dropping shots, the incident would hardly have made any impression

upon me ; but a volley without a reply was a new feature in warfare. As I slipped out of my tent I not only heard but saw a second volley, far away, and evidently within the Russian lines. "Making tracks" to the staff tents, I found everybody on the alert, and met the Mushir muffled in his coat of sables consulting with Hassan Pacha, chief of the staff, and other officers. A third volley from the same spot induced his excellency to proceed to rather more elevated ground, near the first division ; but all was now quiet, and the Mushir having learnt that our advanced posts knew nothing of the cause of this demonstration, resolved to remain where he was until daylight. For myself I returned to my tent, and at length managed to fall asleep. But not for long.

At five o'clock firing to the north of Subatan drew me out, and as dawn was not far distant I sat down on a stone and watched. Beautifully clear was that early morning, the sky glorious with bands of purple and blue, and crimson and gold, not a cloud broke the whole expanse of heaven, and there was just enough wind to carry away the smoke from the camp fires, so that as the light insensibly grew upon the eastern mountains and descended into the plain there was no difficulty in making out, first dimly, and then distinctly, even the smaller features of the marvellous landscape.

It was close to six o'clock when, my eyes wandering in the direction of the Russian head-quarters, I suddenly missed the lines of the enemy's tents. Not a tiny cone of canvas remained to mark the spot where for so long Melikoff had remained quiescent. On Utch Tépé and on Karajol, however, the white tents shone in the morning light, but what had become of the main body of the enemy ? It was soon obvious. He was écheloned along

the ridge which runs from Karajol towards the hills of Yahni, and divides the plain of Kars from that of Subatan or Anni. For perhaps half an hour there was no movement in his brigades, although here and there a battalion seemed to take new ground to the right or left. This half-hour was of great service to us. It enabled the alarm to be given along the Turkish left, and some battalions to be moved from our centre towards the threatened flank.

When the Russians did advance they moved with that remarkable precision which has always distinguished their operations before they come under fire. But it was fully eight o'clock when it became apparent that their object in the first instance was not so much Kars, which was at first feared, as one or other of the two hills called Yahni. Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha had always known that the Greater Yahni was liable to capture at any moment that the Russians chose to direct against it a heavy force. So little had he recked about this hill, that it was not until the Russians had for the second time attacked it on the 18th August he had even cared to occupy it.

From that date, however, two, three, or four battalions, with one battery, had nightly held its crest. It was, if anything, a weakness rather than a strong portion of our position on the left, the real strength of which was a plateau between Yahni and Vezinkeui, of which plateau the four corners were formed by the hill of Little Yahni, Olija Tépé, Vezin Tépé and a high bluff which has no name even among the villagers. Each of these four points had been strongly fortified, and the most northerly of them—that is Little Yahni—was held by "Captain" Mehemet Pacha with from thirteen to sixteen battalions. Slowly and steadily the enemy came on. By nine o'clock they had overlapped the greater Yahni, and after a brief artillery engagement,

in which our batteries on the ravine at Hadjiveli took part, and after a still more brief duel between some battalions of infantry at great ranges, the Turkish troops evacuated the hill in good order and fell back upon the virtually impregnable plateau or quadrilateral.

I suppose my face betrayed the concern which I certainly felt at this juncture, standing beside the Mushir and General Kemball; for the former, turning to me with a smile, indicated with his head a new point of interest, which, so occupied had I been with the movements on our left, I had singularly neglected.

The Russians were in full possession of the southern spur of the Alagsdagh; that is to say, they had won a lodgment on the strongest point of our right. Over and over again in this diary I have noted the loose manner in which sentry duty is done in the Turkish camps, and it seems that a picket belonging to two battalions holding this mountain had been allowed by its officer, an illiterate lieutenant, to go to breakfast at dawn without having one solitary sentinel posted.

The Russian flying column, which Ali Shefik had beaten off at Nadjivan the previous day, had recrossed the Arpa below Anni, and stolen up the hillside at a point where probably two companies could have checked their progress. They surrounded the picket of fifteen or sixteen men, of whom only three escaped, and took the three or four tents in which the men had just been discussing their rice soup. The three men who got away soon gave the alarm, but our two battalions on the mountain were a couple of miles from the Russians, and it was some time before they could attack.

To the help of these two battalions on the higher part of the ridge the Mushir sent two other battalions, under the

command of Hussein Pacha, a brigadier of artillery, who happened to be in camp. Nothing could exceed the steadiness with which these brave fellows advanced up the eastern slope of the great mountain.

The Russians, holding the ridge with five battalions, keeping two in reserve, delivered a well-sustained fire, but by degrees the Turkish skirmishers scaled the heights, taking advantage of every morsel of cover, which was not much, that the ground afforded. The two battalions on the ridge played an important, but still a subordinate part in this little, though very serious, affair.

In the course of two hours—to make a long story short—the Russians were driven off the hill, a good many of their number becoming prisoners, and, with the exception of one or two Cossacks, all of these unfortunates belonged to the 75th Battalion, on which the brunt of the fighting had fallen at Nadjiwan. By noon all was safe in this quarter. It may be worth while, as an instance of the ferocious manner in which the Turks treat their prisoners, to narrate what came within my own observation when the first one of them was brought down to the Mushir's post, above the village of Kerchané.

A little monkey-faced man was the Muscovite, of the Tartar type. The "unspeakable" Turks, two or three battalions of whom were waiting as a reserve, surrounded this by no means prepossessing individual, on whom the first atrocity committed was the presentation of a pipe of tobacco, the second the gift of an apple, the third the offering of a piece of brown bread, and the fourth sympathising inquiries as to whether he had been injured in the encounter. The Muscov clearly could not make out this unlooked-for demeanour on the part of the Turks, but he had already settled down into complacent contemplation of

his position, and the enjoyment of a second pipe, when the attention of his hosts was drawn off by some fresh arrivals, all of whom underwent the same frightful ordeal, so long as the scant tobacco and the few apples held out.

Turning our attention once more towards Yahni—the Russians left half a dozen battalions upon the greater hill, and moved the bulk of their remaining force to the northern side of the ridge which is closed by Buyuk Yahni, and before long some heavy firing showed that they were attacking Kutschuk Yahni, which, as I have said, was held by my good friend the “Captain,” whose force did not exceed twelve guns and 4,000 men. The Russians attacked with not fewer than thirty battalions, averaging perhaps 500 men ; but I use the word “attack” in a strained sense.

They attempted in the first instance to clear the hill with a very heavy artillery fire from not fewer than fifty guns, and they actually succeeded no less than three times in driving the gallant defenders from their trenches. You will be told, I have no doubt, that they also delivered several assaults against the position, but the real facts are that once, and once only, did they send a column against the hill, that the Turks, returning to their trenches, received this column with such a fire from their breechloaders that not more than one battalion actually neared the height ; and that this battalion, after opening out, lost, as usual with Russian soldiers, all pretence of steadiness, and fell back fearfully punished.

A report was brought to the Mushir that 2,800 Russian corpses were left upon the slopes of Little Yahni. His excellency, having a reasonable doubt as to the veracity of this information, sent one of his own aides-de-camp to report upon the truth of the matter. This dashing young captain—one of the best horsemen in the Turkish service

—on returning, was good enough to report in my hearing that he had himself counted 2,000 dead bodies, and that he was sure there must have been several hundreds more. Sir Arnold Kemball unkindly refused to take these figures as accurate, and directed his aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Dougall, R.N., to visit Little Yahni, inviting me to accompany him. A long ride of eight or nine miles brought us to the point. I searched the lower slopes, Mr. Dougall the upper. I found thirty-five dead bodies, Mr. Dougall, forty-five; and, as a matter of course, we had overlapped one another in our count in more than one place.

In point of fact, the number of Russian dead left upon the field of battle did not exceed, if it reached sixty; and although probably five times this number had been carried off by the well-organised ambulances of the Czar's troops, a total loss of 300 or 400 is a very different thing from the fanciful figure of my gallant young friend the captain. I shall not readily forget the expression of the Mushir's face when he learnt the truth of the matter, and I mention the affair chiefly to show the sort of instruments with which Moukhtar Pacha is obliged to work, and, as his excellency has been blamed for sending false telegrams, to prove that at least in one instance the commander-in-chief of the 4th Turkish Army Corps was not responsible for a statement which he had done his best to verify.

Falstaff's men in buckram were nothing to the stark Muscov corpses ingeniously imagined by a brigadier-general, and counted, it must have been, through one of those multiplying glasses familiar to frequenters of One-tree-hill at Greenwich, by an aide-de-camp whose truthfulness seems to render him eminently suited to supply correspondence to certain organs.

On Wednesday morning we naturally expected a re-

newal of the attack on both flanks, but the Russian force continued the whole day long to execute in the far distance the most extraordinarily mysterious manœuvres in which an army was ever engaged. They marched and they countermarched; they deployed and they defiled; they changed front and they resumed their original formation, in a manner which probably afforded to the Imperial strategist a pleasure unalloyed by any exposure of his troops to the slightest danger. The brother of the Czar doubtless thought to punish his troops for their want of steadiness in their attack on Little Yahni by giving them a day's hard drill; and if his Imperial Highness has not proved himself a general of the highest capacity, he has at least shown that he has in him the material of an excellent sergeant-major.

Moukhtar Pacha, not being able from our centre to make out what all this drilling was about, and naturally fearing some demonstration along the line of the Kars river against the great fortress—which it is now no harm to say contained at the time no troops but four battalions of artillerymen, under Colonel Hussein Bey—moved with his staff to Olija Tépé, where, in company of General Kemball, he had the pleasure of witnessing one of the strangest cavalry manœuvres that was ever executed.

A portion of the Russian force remaining at the Greater Yahni consisted of a regiment of regular dragoons. The colonel of this regiment—whether in obedience to some head-quarter orders or not will probably never be known—had left the lower slopes of that mountain and advanced in open column of squadrons against Olija Tépé, as though he would capture it by a *coup de main*. When he had covered a couple of miles of the intervening space, and got within 1,400 or 1,500 yards of the hill, Hadji Redschild Pacha

generously endeavoured, by a few Krupp shells, to awaken this enterprising dragoon to a sense of his situation, and, finding that the projectiles fell neatly among the Russian squadrons, he continued the practice; but the Muscovite leader was not to be deterred from the execution of his original conception. He continued his advance, actually coming within half a mile of the guns. It was only when one nine-centimetre shell emptied five saddles that this colonel appeared to become aware a fortified hill can hardly be taken by light cavalry. Then he drew off. But his horses had not yet had enough exercise, and crossing the plateau diagonally he attempted a similar feat against Vezin Tépé. Here a like reception awaited him, and he then moved to Little Yahni, where the "Captain" emptied a few more saddles, upon which the astonished Russian returned to his former position on the Greater Yahni, leaving, it may have been, half a troop of horses and men upon the scene of his Quixotic exploit.

Towards evening an approach of some of the Russian troops in the direction of Subatan induced the Mushir to telegraph instructions to Moussa Pacha, commanding at Kizil Tépé, to send out some battalions, which at five o'clock, supported by a couple of batteries, struck a heavy blow upon the enemy's flank. As the light died away and the Russians changed their front to meet the onslaught of their old companion-in-arms—for Moussa Pacha, previous to his entry into the Turkish service, had obtained the rank of general of cavalry in the armies of the Czar—the scene became magnificent beyond conception. Moussa Pacha had some ten battalions; the Russians probably twice that number; but the nature of the ground prevented all of the latter coming into action, and on one side and the other battalion faced battalion. In this affair the artillery played

a very prominent, but decidedly ineffective part. It was upon the infantry fire that the result depended, and such infantry fire it is not given to one man to see twice in a lifetime. It is nothing to say that the roar was continuous, but as the night drew on the lines of fire remained, as it were, ruled upon the face of the terrain. Now dim through the smoke, now golden as liquid iron, anon bright as the electric spark, the fire of the Turkish troops was blasting as forked lightning, and seemed to be absolutely unintermittent.

The Russian reply was vigorous and well sustained, but, owing to the slower action of their rifles, nothing like so striking in its continued intensity. The darker grew the night, the flickering orbs of heaven paling their radiance before the *feu infernal* of the hostile ranks, the brighter grew the murderous lines of the rifles; and dawn the next morning showed how terrible was the encounter, although probably at no point did the enemies approach each other nearer than from 600 to 700 yards. By half-past seven o'clock the Russians drew off, yet for one hour afterwards were to be heard and seen "the distant and random guns that the foe were sullenly firing."

Yesterday morning the enemy still occupied the Greater Yahni, but the bulk of his force was concentrated on the middle of the ridge, where he had fortified a little hill known as Kabak Tépé, or what we might call "Gourd Mount." The wisdom of the Mushir in declining to seriously contest the possession of Buyuk Yahni was manifested, however, as early as nine o'clock, when the Russian division, which had for two days occupied that advanced position, began to retire, at first of its own accord. But "Captain" Mehemet Pacha, from Little Yahni, and Hassan

Pacha, with a brigade from Hadji-veli, soon began to press the retreat.

It is nothing to say that the Russians fell back along the ridge in good order—that they always do when in close formation. They showed their teeth, however, in such very marked fashion that after five hours' engagement—chiefly of artillery, although perhaps a dozen battalions on each side were from time to time engaged—about four o'clock the Mushir sent orders to cease the pursuit, and the enemy, nothing loth, did not attempt reprisals when Hassan and Mehemet began to return to their positions of the morning. It was found that the Russians had constructed upon the outer slopes of the Greater Yahni not merely entrenchments for their infantry, but redoubts for their guns—redoubts thrown up in a night, and yet as perfect in their lines, as beautiful in their finish, as were ever made at our own School of Instruction on the Medway. Last night passed quietly.

This morning the greater part of the enemy's force still held Kabak Tépé and the section of the ridge between that mount and Karajol. Under the idea that possibly the attack might be renewed, the Turkish commander-in-chief attempted a diversion this morning by sending some artillery and cavalry towards Utch Tépé, and the consequent engagement lasted, though without result, until nearly nightfall. Still the Russians did not retire to their original centre camp. For four days and nights the Grand Duke had kept his troops in the field resting on their arms, the only canvas visible among them being the tilts of the ever-busy ambulance wagons, whose continual movement along the ridge showed how heavily the invaders must have suffered.

To-day, after a consultation with the Mushir, and I may

add after asking the opinion of Sir Arnold Kemball, I have, not without misgivings, arrived at the conclusion that little of interest now remains in the Asian campaign ; and fairly broken down for the moment, I leave the camp to-day heartily re-echoing, as regards his excellency and the army which has fought so courageously under his orders, the kind terms in which Ghazi Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha took leave of me, “ We have now been *bons camarades* together for a long time. I have been always pleased to see you, and I much regret this necessary separation.”

CHAPTER XX.

TREBIZOND, *October* 16.—It would seem that not only myself, but Moukhtar Pacha and General Kemball were mistaken in supposing that, with the diversion on Utch Tépé on the morning of the 5th, the fighting had finished for the year. But it must not be supposed that the retirement from Kizil Tépé, which has followed some further fighting, is in any way the result of the Russian attacks. It was long known that such an advanced point could not be held when the winter came on, and it would have been given up in the course of the current fortnight, even had the enemy remained quiet. Indeed, its only use was as the point of a wedge which, so long as the enemy did not materially exceed us in number, we might hope to drive into the heart of his lines at Orta or Baldviran. When the division of Grenadiers arrived that hope was nullified, and on the morning of my departure it was more than suspected by our chief that still further reinforcements had reached the Russians.

Indeed, information long ago received, and I have reason to believe transmitted to the British Government, but not much trusted at the time, that the enemy would delay his active movements till after the harvest, has turned out correct. It was not believed, principally because it seemed absurd, that the Russians should allow our crops to be harvested, if they had any chance of taking them as they stood; but probably what was meant, was that after the harvest a portion of the Russian militia of the Cau-

casus would be released from household duties and available, at least, to hold reserved positions while their comrades in arms undertook more active operations.

And yet the harvest can make very little difference in the Caucasus. The granary of Georgia is not on the other side of the Arpa, but on this. Five-sixths of the immense quantity of grain produced in ordinary years in the plains of Kars, Subatan, and Arishkerd (or Alashguerd) goes to Erivan, Gumri, and Tiflis. Very little corn grows among the Georgian mountains, and this year I believe all that part of the Russian empire will be exceptionally fed by means of her ports on the Caspian. Still the Russians, let them make what headway they will, will not find much in way of grain left to reward them for their enterprise.

Alashguerd was, as you knew months ago from me, before July quite clear of standing crops; Subatan's fields have been swept for forage by both sides, and lucky have been the villagers who have saved one-tenth of their corn. But on the plain of Kars, though much had been wasted by the advance of the Russian army, and more during its very rapid retreat, the great bulk of the wheat and the barley remained untouched, and when it was once within our lines it was of course allowed to mature.

The first thing that struck me on leaving the army was the immense number of arabas conveying samon, or finely-chopped straw, for storage in the villages contained in, or immediately in the rear of, the Turkish position. Now, an araba is a very rough framework of open planks set upon a wooden axle which revolves with two solid wooden wheels. How such a contrivance could carry chopped straw, except in bags, was a puzzle, and there are no bags, or next to none, certainly not enough to hold the grain, in this part of the

world. The invention of the peasants, who cannot conceive of any improvement in the arabas, is nevertheless equal to making the best of them ; and accordingly the bullock wagons are fitted with a large framework, the sides of which are filled in with closely meshed ropes of fibre made out of certain creeping plants to be found in the few places in Armenia which grow underwood. This framework contains about a hundred bushels of chopped straw, and it is wonderful to see how the horses of the country, even army horses doing hard work, thrive on this poor stuff, when they cannot get barley.

The barley was being sent principally to Kars, but some of it also towards Alagsdagh, and the wheat—so much of it as I examined was plump and heavy—was waiting in heaps on the earthen threshing and winnowing floors for sacks, in order that it might be transported to the former destination.

The anti-Turkish clique have got up a report, not for the first time, that Kars has been denuded of both ammunition and food to supply the army in the field, and that in case of a new siege the great fortress would not be able to hold out for three months. I speak on the authority of the officer commanding the artillery in Kars when I say that, within a fortnight of the relief of the city all its expended stores for siege guns had been replaced, and naturally now remain, since they have certainly not been used ; and I add, that at no time has the city been without seven months' provisions, while now it has twelve months' food, and in the course of this month will have rations for at least eighteen months.

Junior officers all along my line of route to Begli Ahmed and Sarakamish were engaged in hurrying up the grain, occasionally resorting to the vigorous measures which

are absolutely necessary in a country like this, if "yavash" and "bakalum" are not to be the order of the day. Not a village without its mulazim, hardly a district without its iuz-bashi, or even its coulasse, was to be found in the first fifty miles of my journey. These gentlemen had always to be asked before the peasants ventured as much as to sell me a feed for my horses; but I will say they did their spiriting very gently in my case, and the difficulty actually was to be allowed to pay.

However, on that point I remained firm, and so, getting into conversation with the people, I found them fairly well satisfied with the prices the Government was paying them for their arpa, and boghdai, and samon. They all believed they could have made a little more of it in the open market; Armenian speculators would probably have given them an increase of a few paras, hoping to make many piastres by re-selling it at an advance to the army. But they fully recognised the right of the army to have the grain; and as they are paid for it, not by "obligations" negotiable years hence, but in caimé, or paper money, which is practically the only medium of exchange in this part of the empire, they are well content to forego a contingent profit, and secure an immediate command of what they want for the winter.

This seems as good an opportunity as any for saying a few words on a subject which no fellow can be expected to understand until he has bought much experience. I refer to the currency of Turkey. Nominally, the standard is the gold lira or medjidie, something between a napoleon and a sovereign, and value for a few pence more than 18s. This lira contains 100 piastres or ghrush, and each of these is, therefore, equal to about $2\frac{1}{4}d.$ of our money. But silver is at a discount in comparison with gold, and 102 or 103 silver

piastres should accordingly be received for a gold lira. But a great part of the population seldom sees either silver or gold, and knows only caimé and "bad money," that is to say, copper and copper plated with the thinnest coating of silver it is possible to conceive. Of caimé about 180 piastres for a lira are received at Constantinople, at Trebizond nearly the same, at Erzeroum as much as 188 to 190, while at Kars 168 to 170 is the ruling rate, though I have got 172, and have heard of 175, while I have been "done" for as little as 160. In the villages near Kars the peasants will not allow at the rate of more than 160 to 165 for a lira when buying sheep or barley.

In other words, the nearer to the Russian frontier, the greater is the confidence shown in the paper money of the Turkish Government—which is perhaps one of the greatest anomalies of the present complicated situation. But than this caimé there is a lower depth. It is difficult for Englishmen to realize that there can be any greater falling off than 88 to 90 per cent. in a nation's money; but caimé is like Bank of England notes in comparison with the beshliks and altulihs and brown money generally. At Erzeroum a 20 piastre note in caimé fetches 22 piastres in "bad money;" at Kars 25, and here 26.

Thus it is possible in this marvellous country to buy things and get more than your money back in change. To day, in a *café* here, I gave a 20 piastre caimé note in payment for two cups of the thick and cloying beverage which Turks call coffee, and which they have at least many grounds for so denominating. I received back in exchange a 10 piastre note, a 5 piastre note, and five and a half piastres in copper. In other words, I had my coffee for nearly a penny less than nothing; while if all the change had been in copper, I should have been a gainer of about tenpence on the transaction. And the extraordinary thing

is that nobody seems to attempt to make money by buying caimé at say 190 in Erzeroum and selling at 170 in Kars, or clearing more than 10 per cent. in three or four days on each lira invested. The Government pays in caimé, allowing the local discount, but it receives caimé for *nil*, and it can well afford to conform to local customs in the matter, seeing the money costs it nothing but the paper and the ink. Both are as bad as they can be, and the profit to the Government on the destruction of notes by wear and tear must be enormous.

Each note, whether for one piastre or one hundred, bears on its back an unvarying stamp in Turkish characters, and another with varying numbers and letters, certifying that the note has been registered as genuine by the Imperial Ottoman Bank. But the notes cease to be current so soon as friction has worn a hole in either stamp. That you may see what a gain this wear must be to the issuers of the notes, *i.e.*, the Treasury, I must give you a morsel of my own experience.

During one of my flying visits to Kars for supplies, I refused no fewer than forty-two notes of one denomination or another in less than thirty hours, and eighteen of which I tendered were also refused, though none of them had got serious damage done to the cachets. Considering that all my transactions did not reach to a figure of £10 sterling, it is clear the Government finds its account in the use of paper so bad that probably its parallel is not to be found in this world.

The worse the fabric the greater the profit, since notes destroyed can never be re-presented, even if Turkish finances were once more to assume a position of perfect equilibrium. I protest it makes me smile to hear the people in a perfectly straightforward way speak of this caimé as "good money." In the "bad money" the holder has at least the

security of the value of the old copper. To make the thing plain to every reader, I have compiled the following little table showing the value of a lira, or eighteen shillings and some pence, in caimé and in bad money :—

	Caimé—Pias.	Bad Money—Pias.
At Constantinople	180	?
At Trebizond	180-2	234
At Erzeroum	188-90	209-10
At Kars.	168-72	212
At the frontier villages . . .	160-165	205

Retail transactions are conducted in bad money, unless gold, silver, or caimé be expressly mentioned. At Kars, for example, you buy an oke— $2\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.—of tea at 100 piastres. You pay 80 piastres caimé, or 45 in silver, or 44 in gold.

Now, here comes another point of curiosity. If you want good tea, you buy it of a Persian merchant, who sits placidly in his den of a shop, and while eyeing you keenly, as though he believed you meant to rob him, tries to show how very little he values your custom or any other. If you ask him he will tell you that this is caravan tea, brought through Persia and the Mesopotamian desert to Kars, and therefore having its goodness guaranteed by the toil that has been expended on its conveyance.

A little while after you find that this very fellow has bought this very tea—ordinary Congou or Souchong—at Erzeroum, whither Mr. Magack, or some other leading merchant, has imported it from England, and that the stuff you have been paying more than 3s. a pound for has cost your Persian friend just ninepence, delivered on his own arabas. I will only add, *en passant*, that in this part of Asia tea has quite broken up the monopoly once enjoyed

by coffee, and it bids fair to displace the latter altogether as the beverage of the middle classes.

And now to resume my *notes de voyage*. At Sarakamish, the Circassian settlement on the eastern side of the Soghanly Dag, where you may remember we camped on our march to the relief of Kars, and where three villages, tenanted by these aliens, possess every sign of prosperity, thanks to the fertile lands bestowed upon the exiles by the Turkish Government, and to the proximity of great forests, now gold and russet with autumnal foliage, were to be found, as might have been expected, many of the gallant warriors who have of late "absquatulated" from the front, in their long coats, the breasts bedizened with silver ornaments, and girt about the hips with silver girdles. No mere creatures of toil these; indeed, I discovered them supporting their poor backs against walls and posts, and talking vehemently in groups, doubtless about the great deeds they had persuaded themselves they achieved during the campaign.

I had heard a rumour of a short cut across the Soghanly range, and I offered a reward to any of these adorned cravens who would show it to me. For a long time there was no response. At length a boy brought a big, hulking youth, who agreed to show me the path for fifty piastres. We started. After a few yards he demanded the money. I declined to pay until we reached Meshingerd, whereupon he promptly turned back, as he would have done if he had got the money, for there is no path nearer the high-road I already well knew, and Meshingerd, instead of being three hours' journey, as these truthful beings asserted, is no less than seven across the mountain. Wherefore, let all concerned take warning never to pay a Tcherkess guide in advance.

At Keuprikeui, where the roads from Alashguerd runs into the two roads from Kars, I was glad to find that all the need for troops at the front had not induced the Mushir to neglect the security of this means of communication with his right, and that he has here still two battalions and a battery. But the singular laxity of Turkish sentinels here again was conspicuous.

It was ten o'clock at night when I reached this dirty Armenian village, and the pitch darkness was intensified by a blinding rain. Mistaking the lights in the tents for those of the houses, I stumbled right into the middle of the camp without a single challenge, and when I asked of a man my way to the wretched room that is called a café, I found I was speaking to a sentry, who had carefully put his rifle under cover to save it from a wetting and himself from the trouble of holding it. So have I, in company with English officers, more than once entered the main camp of the army of Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha at the dead of night from both his flanks without the least sign of a challenge, though it was not always so easy to pass in daylight. How under such circumstances cavalry and, indeed, infantry surprises are avoided, puzzles me, and many more than myself. It was such laxity that lost the picket on Alagsdagh on the morning of the 2nd inst.

Between Hassan Kaleh and Erzerouni I was well pleased to meet another battery excellently horsed, equipped, and manned, on its way to the front; and I believe three others, each with three ammunition wagons, have followed it by this time. Although Erzeroum itself could hardly be held long against regular approaches, it could be now maintained for two or three months, and the positions on the western side of it are all but impregnable.

During the four days business detained me in Erzeroum,

I had the pleasure of visiting the English hospital organized by Dr. Casson, and under the charge of Dr. C. Fetherstonhaugh, and found everything most admirably organized, but only seventy of the one hundred and sixty beds at the moment occupied. The comfort and even comparative luxury of this "hasta khané," contrasted strangely with that of our hospital at the front, where a couple of hundred freshly wounded men—to say nothing of the numbers dressed and sent to their own camps—had to lie on the cold ground for want of beds, and without blankets or coverlets.

In Erzeroum everything was in abundance, but when I left the army there were fifty or sixty patients waiting their turn, and not half a dozen bandages available. There was not a drop of chloroform in the camp, and the last hundred operations had been performed under the influence of ether; indeed, all was wanting except care and skill. By this time all has been supplied, but I deem it very questionable policy which left the front and acute cases so long without stores, while Erzeroum cases were monopolising the good things provided by English charity.

From Erzeroum to the front the road by the Soghanly Dagħ was one long procession of camels, horses, mules, asses, and bullock wagons, bearing to Kars and the army biscuit, grain, and ammunition, while from the forests of the mountain range just named huge trees, each big enough for the mainmast of an old line-of-battle ship, were being hauled to assist in building winter quarters for the troops. But much of the natural transport of the country as is now forced into the service of the army, there is enough of it left to carry on the legitimate operations of trade. On this side of Erzeroum I met only three trains of supplies for the troops, but an endless succession of beasts of burthen carrying cottons and yarns in bales,

teas in chests, hardware in boxes, and sporting powder in barrels from this port to the great commercial centre of the province, which is far too much neglected by English merchants. I do not think there was more than a mile of the road at any one point without such a transport train, and I happen to know that more than a moiety of all that had been advised from this place to Erzeroum when I left it was destined for Persia.

But if Tergukasoff again shuts up the caravan road by Alashguerd, how are the goods to get there? And this matter, I take it, comes home well to England; for, with the exception of some German gunpowder and French sugar, all the goods I met happened for the nonce to be of unquestionable British origin.* I have seen some cases of German knick-knacks on the quay; but here again nearly everything for the moment is English. And how will English merchants get their money if the goods sent by them do not reach their destination?

I could write much on the fatigues of the road, especially now that on this side of the Paryadres mountains the autumnal rains have set in, and turned what was made one of the finest highways of the world into a slough of despond. I could harrow up your soul with descriptions of the cruelties inflicted upon helpless animals by the brutes to whom the Turkish Government has committed the monopoly of the supply of post horses. Has not *Ancient Pistol* got something to say about—

“Pack horses
And hollow, pampered jades of Asia,
Which cannot go but thirty miles a day”?

And I could tell how five of them together had not among

* See Appendix A.

them an inch of skin from mane to tail, the backs of all running with pus and blood. I could paint for you the delights of having, with health shaken, with enfeebled body and diminished energy, to sit on such beasts fourteen hours a-day for five days at a stretch, and to be thankful at night for a corner of a stable without even a wisp of straw under one's ribs, and probably without even a refreshing cup of tea before trying to sleep.

But these things are of the common-places of travel in such countries as Armenia, which I quit without a belief in, or hope for, its people—governors or governed, Islamite or Christian ; whose millions of barren acres seem blasted with a primeval curse ; whose inhabitants are so unlovely in all that graces humanity as any race on the face of the earth ; but whose geographical position lends it an importance that would never have been acquired for it by the sedate inertia of the Mussulman, or by the overreaching cunning, the contemptible chicanery, the crass cowardice of the “Christians,” whether they call themselves American Protestants, or bow to the spiritual supremacy of Pius IX. or the Patriarch of Etchmiadzin.

CHAPTER XXI.

November 3.—My diary has brought down the history of the campaign to the evening of October 5th.

On the 5th, not only the Turkish commander-in-chief, but other high authorities in the camp of Kerchané, were of opinion the fighting was virtually over for the winter, although the enemy had not fallen back to his old camping ground, and although his legions still hovered menacingly in the distance. He had been guilty of such egregious blundering during the engagements of the first four days of October, and had suffered for them so severely, that although we well knew of his large reinforcements, it was reasonable to suppose he had struck his hardest blow, and would rest for the winter, content with having shown for the first time in the campaign that Russian troops can fight fairly well on occasion. And yet it seemed unlikely that he should have received two divisions of reinforcements to do so little. It may be well to repeat, that these reinforcements alone were nearly equal to the whole force of which Moukhtar Pacha could dispose. Our "field state" on the 18th September showed that we had 28,000, or 29,000 men on our long line from Kars, through Kizil Tépé to Anni.

On the 1st of October a column of six battalions which had been operating without result on the Russian right from the direction of Ardahan arrived at Vezin Keui, and the next morning two batteries arrived from Erzeroum, increasing our field artillery to eighty-four guns. This

brought up our force to 29,700, or, at the very most, 30,000 men, when the three days' battle of the 2nd to the 4th October commenced. The enemy on the 1st September had over 23,000 men on his line from Karajol to Utch Tépé. On the 18th of that month he received his long promised division of Grenadiers from Moscow—12,000 men with forty-eight guns; so that, as he had at least one hundred and twelve guns in action on August 25th, he had on the 18th September certainly not fewer than one hundred and sixty Krupp cannon.

On the 29th September he received at least one brigade of another division (variously reported to us as "of Vladka," and as "the 2nd Division, 1st Corps"), which was completed within two days, and which brought other six batteries of eight guns each. The force under the orders of the Grand Duke Michael and his chief of the staff was therefore not less than 47,000 men, and over two hundred guns. In other words, he had three men to our two and he had, moreover, five guns to our two, leaving altogether on one side the forces of both Tergukasoff and Koord Ismail Pacha, to the latter of whom in conjunction with Dervish Pacha at Batoum, the failure of the campaign is really due.

Unfortunately in August, Ahmed Moukhtar had generously refused reinforcements—except a few cavalry—from the Baghdad army corps, believing that they were more wanted in Europe, and this was an irreparable mistake, for when the Russian reinforcements began to reach Asia, we had no reserve upon which we could draw in time to raise our strength before the crisis came. And yet, to the immortal honour of the Turkish troops and their Mushir, on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th October, they gave the enemy such a reception as it was supposed he would not care to again encounter.

But his superiority of force enabled him to accomplish a little later a very ordinary piece of strategy. I have before said, that to turn our right would need a good many more than seven battalions; and, as we know, the seven battalion movement by Nadjivan failed. On the 10th October, twenty-seven battalions, with a brigade of cavalry and forty guns, were despatched on a like mission in the same direction, and, thanks to a field telegraph, they worked in harmony with the Russian main body, which, when Moukhtar carried out his intention of retiring from Kizil Tépé, had advanced to Subatan. Not only was the Russian flanking force larger, but it took a wider round, going as far south as Digur. If the Turkish general had been provided with an adequate body of cavalry, he could have rendered co-operation with the enemy's main body difficult, if not impossible; but as you have long ago learnt from me, our cavalry was poor in quantity and worse in quality, being, for anything like a large movement, absolutely untrustworthy.

All that Ahmed Moukhtar could do was to try to crush General Lazareff's flanking force; but he had not enough men to do this effectually. It is true he sent his brother-in-law, Redschild Pacha, a brave soldier indeed, but a man in little culture and no originality, with fifteen battalions to attack Lazareff, but what were they against double their number? Of course they failed—of course the Russians won a fight which took place in the rear of Alagsdagh, at Oghur, on the 13th. Before this the main body of the Muscovites advanced, and reoccupied the greater Yahni hill, which they had so ignominiously abandoned on the morning of the 4th, and this on the 14th served them as a base for an attack on Olija or Aulia Tépé, which they had neglected on the 2nd. They did not again shatter

their columns against Little Yahni; they chose the more central hill of the Turkish position, on the right of the quadrilateral, and they did well, for if they succeeded, at whatever sacrifice of life, in taking it, not only had they broken the quadrilateral, but they had cut the Ottoman line between the position of Alagsdagh and the fortified hills which kept up our communication between Kars and head-quarters.

"At any cost take Olija Tépé," was the order given to General Heymann, who had the division of the Grenadiers of the Caucasus with fifty-six guns, in other words, 12,000 men, given him for the purpose, while Tcherniaieff stood close by along the ravine at Lower Hadji Veli, towards Kerchané, with as many more of the Moscov Grenadiers, in case the 12,000 men were not enough to carry the hill, which is divided from the Alagsdagh by two ravines, one practicable for infantry, the other impracticable for aught without wings, save only at Upper Hadji Veli. To take Olija Tépé was to take this village, which is commanded by that height, and to cut off all communication between the right and the left of the Turkish line. Now, poor Moukhtar had to hold, as I have heretofore shown, a line of not less than eighteen miles; he had detached fifteen battalions to endeavour to protect his right rear. He could spare for the defence of Olija Tépé, all-important as it was, no more than about 2,000 men—the sequel is obvious, and the detail of the fighting has little interest.

The Russians, abandoning their common shell, which is habitually ineffective, used with their seven batteries nothing but shrapnel. Until that—too little employed by the Turks—had done its work, the gallant Grenadiers remained out of range, and it was only when it had accomplished its murderous object and when from the few troops

holding Alagsdagh a small reinforcement was trying to come to the rescue of the little garrison of Olija Tépé, that the Russians assaulted.

Need I go further into particulars than to say that the 12,000 men advanced up the hill against the 2,000 at three several points? Naturally, the end came very soon, and the Turkish centre, which had resisted attacks on the 28th July, the 18th August, and the 2nd October, was smashed in at last.

The hill of Vezin was next carried—a task of no great difficulty—but Little Yahni was left alone until the retention of it by the Turks had enabled the left wing of Ahmed Moukhtar, with that general, to retire across the valley to Kars, in spite of the opposition of a brigade especially set apart all day by the Russian generals to watch “Captain” Mehemet Pacha’s position and cut off the retreat on the great fortress. The right wing was now isolated on Alagsdagh, pressed on the front by Tchernaeff, on the left wing by Heymann, and on the rear by Lazareff. During the night part of it surrendered, but the greater part made a bold stroke for liberty, and gallantly cut its way through to its rear, coming out—with great loss indeed, and in a very disintegrated form, but, after all, coming out—near Vairan Kaleh, on the road to Ardost. So ended act one of the bloody drama.

Ismail Pacha with his forty battalions had already begun to fall back from the slopes of Ararat along the Alashguerd plain towards the pass which begins at Zadikan and ends at Delibaba, and through which I, in French phrase, “assisted,” being the only Englishman on the spot, at Tergukasoff’s retreat before Reis Ahmed Pacha in the last days of June. Tergukasoff had enough remembrance of this pass not to tackle it again in a hurry; but the

Koord Ismail, instead of trying to hold the two roads over the heights of Tahir, "operated a junction" with Moukhtar's army at Choban Keupri, and finally showed a clean pair of heels to Erzeroum. It needs explanation why this ignorant leader deserted first the Tahir Pass, and, secondly, the works at Choban bridge and Keupri village. If he can plead orders, they are at least incomprehensible; but the same may be almost said of Moukhtar's reasons for abandoning the line of the Soghanly Dagħ. However, I am here ahead of my subject.

The commander-in-chief left Kars on the day after he entered it, and found, somehow, 10,000 men for its garrison. I am afraid that force may not be sufficient, and my reasons are these. The parapets of Kars are sixteen miles in extent; during the siege in the spring and early summer twenty-nine battalions of 600 men each were not thought too many, and were not found too many to man that parapet. How then can 10,000 men do it? But, on the other hand, we must not forget that the fewer the men the longer will their provisions last, that there is plenty at least of corn in the place, and plenty of ammunition, and, above all, that it is perfectly useless for the Russian investors to storm one fort or redoubt, unless they storm always two others, and usually three, since Kars is so fortified that each fort is commanded by from two to four others, and would be perfectly untenable under their fire.

Hussein Hami Pacha, who commanded in the siege last spring, is again in charge of the fortress; and Colonel Hussein Bey, commanding the artillery, is the last man in Turkey to consent to the surrender of the place which owes its armament to his care, and owes its very existence under the Ottoman flag at this moment to his pluck, skill, and endurance during the siege of May to July, 1877.

Moukhtar had very few men left to take with him to the Soghanly along that plain by Begli Ahmed to Sarakamish, on which the Russian cavalry ought to have cut him off without a hope of escape; and the very fact that they did not shows he must have been, as we know he was, joined by no insignificant number of troops from Vairan Kaleh; in other words, many Turks on the Alagsdagh must have been able to break through in spite of the capture of four pachas, namely, Hadji Redschid, Hassan Kiazin, Mustapha Djawud, and Omer, the first and last lieutenant-generals, the second Moukhtar's chief of the staff.

With a very small force, the Mushir held Sevin in May and June, and it is certainly a surprise that he should have given up that position, which covers the three roads over the Soghanly range, without a fight, more particularly as he had his old entrenchments still sound and good, as I can testify from a visit on my way home, ready to his hand. But it is possible that until his junction with Ismail he had not enough men to hold it. Still this does not explain why Ismail should not have held Tahir with twenty of his forty battalions, and sent the rest by way of Khorassan to Moukhtar at Sevin. The truth is that he would listen to no orders till he found himself safe behind the earthworks at Keuprikeui, and that then it was too late for the battalions to win their way twenty-five miles to Sevin. If he had crossed the Aras at the Khorassan ford, which he passed within three miles of, he would have saved two days. In those two days Moukhtar had to retire from his old entrenched camp, in the face of far superior Russian forces.

A good deal has been said in England of the "position" of Keuprikeui. Keuprikeui is a village nearly a mile to the west of the only bridge which crosses the Aras near this

point. The bridge is situated half a dozen yards below the junction of the Aras and the Pasin river, and in winter and spring the united streams, or either of them, cannot be crossed for miles, except by this bridge. But as yet the bridge is rather a luxury than a necessity, and in October I rode four times across the Aras within six miles of the bridge, never finding the water more than wet the soles of my boots.

It is clear that the chance of holding ground, however good in other respects, situated on one bank of a river which can be crossed anywhere above that point, could not be very excellent ; but, as a matter of fact, Keuprikeui can be turned by twenty roads among the hills to the north, as well as by fifty fords to the south. The sole use of the earthworks that were put up at Keuprikeui and on the hills behind it was to afford a rallying-point against a large, and a resistance to a small, force marching to the plain of Hassan Kaleh from the eastward. The ridges at Keuprikeui were also valuable as a flank cover to a camp at Sevin, especially after the floods had set it, as Sevin itself closes the paths by the hills. Sevin evacuated and Tahir abandoned, Keuprikeui was about as much use against the advancing Russian columns as Canute's foot against the waves, or Mrs. Partington's broom against the Atlantic.

Behind Keuprikeui lies the wide and long plain of Hassan Kaleh, the northern side of which is adorned with the finest old Genoese castle in Asia, and under this ancient fortress lies a town of perhaps 1,200 houses, some very large and well built, some, of course, the merest hovels. In the plain of Hassan Kaleh, which is twenty miles in length by ten in extreme width, there may be counted at one glance no fewer than nineteen villages, and probably there are three- or four-and-twenty. If the Russians winter here, they

would, therefore, find plenty of house-room without the trouble of putting up huts. To the south of this plain the hills are impracticable, except by one road leading from Mush, and dividing into two branches at Killi, twenty-five miles to the south.

One of these branches leads to Hassan Kaleh, running due north, the other by the north-west to Erzeroum. The Deven Boyun, or strictly the Devening Boyun—only that colloquially the *i* and *g* are not sounded—ridge to the east of the Armenian capital does not close this latter road, though one formidable fort close to Erzeroum on the heights seals it at that end. To the north Erzeroum can be approached by several paths before the snow comes. The Pass of Nochultab, leading down from Tortum, is almost impracticable for troops, and quite so for other than light mountain guns. The Pass of Bar, on the Olti road, is more open, though at one point the formidable defile of Gorgee Boghaz offers to Moukhtar Pacha a chance of effectually stopping the march of the Russian column which is said to be descending from Olti. But there is just a possibility of turning by sending a column along the Tortum valley, and, so long as communications are kept open at Tortum, a force could be sent down the Tivas river and up the Djoruk towards Baiboort, thus accomplishing at once two great objects—cutting Moukhtar off from his only practicable base at Trebizond, and approaching Erzeroum along the almost continuous plain which stretches from Baiboort to the capital of the province, with only one interruption at the Gop and Kop mountains. There are two excellent roads over these mountains, that to the south being the steepest, but the best, although the other is practicable for any and all kinds of troops.

CHAPTER XXII.

GHAZI MOUKHTAR PACHA entered Erzeroum at the head, not even of a brigade, but of a mass of disorganized soldiery, whom, however, he soon pulled together, and having once more the advantage of Faizy Pacha to see that the wolf Ismail was kept up to the mark in his duty, the commander-in-chief went on the 27th October to Gorgee Boghaz, where he made sure of that strong point, placing at it the picked men of Ismail's comparatively fresh troops. His own remnant from Alagsdagh held the curved ravine in front of the position of Deven Boyun. The whole of the crest was covered with entrenchments, both pits and redoubts, roughly but effectively designed and made.

On the 28th Moukhtar examined every inch of the ground, expressed the opinion that he could hold it even with fewer troops than those at his disposal, and extended some of his men to the right, near the Soghilar Daggh, in order to prevent any possibility of a turning movement from that direction.

On the 1st November, just as the works had received their finishing touch, when it had been ascertained beyond all doubt that the curved and steep road descending nearly a mile, and rising nearly three-quarters of a mile along the sides of the great ravine running along the front of the position was absolutely commanded at every point, not merely by guns, but by small arms, the enemy were reported at Kurujouk, and a reconnaissance pushed out found they were indeed there in force, for their advanced

guard at least numbered 10,000 men. On the 3rd they came still nearer and pushed forward to the foot of the Deven Boyun position. They were prevented from coming too close by an advanced fort, well constructed, on the eastern side of the ravine, on the last spur of the Soghilar Dag. But for some reason this fort was now judged to be untenable, although I have always considered it the best part of the Deven Boyun works, especially after two redoubts had been constructed for the express purpose of covering it.

The abandonment of this advanced work allowed the invaders to bring their men up within a mile and a half of the Deven Boyun front. Moukhtar's force, though nominally thirty battalions, was in reality about 12,000 men. The Russian line included more nearly 30,000 than 25,000 men, extended along a front of perhaps eight miles.

Moukhtar was weak in field artillery, but he had ten batteries, or sixty guns, eighteen of these commanding the ravine road on the Deven Boyun front. The Russian guns were about 120 in number, disposed along their line at five several points.

Over and over again, until I have tired of the subject, I have pointed out the singular neglect of night outposts by the Turkish generals. It was owing to this neglect that the Russians were able to work round to the south of Alagsdag. The loss of Deven Boyun was due to the same cause. Incredible as it may seem, with at least 3,000 in the Erzeroum lines there was not a single vidette on the eastern side of the Deven Boyun ravine.

During the grey of the morning, long before the sun peeped over the plain of Passin, the Russian infantry moved stealthily in twos and threes over the ground. Once or twice a slight noise caused by the stumbling of very small

detachments over the rugged rocks alarmed the Turkish sentinels on the west of the ravine, but no general alarm was given. And the Muscovs, trusted in open order for the first time in the campaign with good results, won across to the west side of the ravine and found plenty of shelter and of concealment at the foot of the almost precipitous rocks, among which three tiny tracks alone offered even partial foothold.

Early in the morning of the 5th the Russians attacked, not Gorgee Boghaz, but some trenches on the left centre near a couple of villages which lie to the north-east of Erzeroum, and are called Handji and Soghanli. The Muscovite force outnumbered the Turks in the proportion of at least two to one, but it could not make the slightest headway against the lines of fire poured from the Turkish trenches. Three several attacks, extending over nearly three hours, were made by the forces of General Heimann ; but although the sons of the Czar, rendered confident by their recent victories, seemed to think themselves invincible, they nevertheless found it out of the question to persevere, and a little before eleven o'clock fell back in only tolerable order.

An hour later, this apparent turning movement having been most emphatically defeated, what was the surprise of Moukhtar Pacha to see a demonstration in force against the very front of what, in the estimation of every competent judge, was one of the most impregnable positions ever taken up by the troops of any country ; and, more strangely still, the attack was made by cavalry. Everybody asked his neighbour, was the insanity of the 3rd October, noted on a previous page, about to be repeated on a much larger scale ? Did the Russian cavalry suppose themselves to be furnished with wings after the manner of the famous steed of Perseus, that they should ride against

a position having a natural ditch like that ravine, and having earthworks rude but strong?

Not a gun was there among these horsemen, not even one of the light cavalry pieces which usually accompany their reconnaissances, nor was there a single infantry soldier in sight, beyond, perhaps, a couple of battalions resting on their arms in the distance where, over a second but smaller stream-bed, these centaurs of the north were making what appeared to be a triumphant march on Erzeroum. On and on and on they came, until at last Ghazi Moukhtar gave the word for his troops to leave their entrenchments and to chase this adventurous brigade of cavalry away from the front.

I think there is no doubt that his excellency jumped to the conclusion these cavalry were only occupying his attention while another attack was being prepared against the position of Ismail's troops. But the flat-caps do not budge. They receive the fire of the first companies of the Turkish troops with an approach to equanimity; it is even thought that they are going to advance against their Ottoman adversaries. Madness upon madness is this, it would appear,—the Pelion upon Ossa of tactical absurdity is surely this cavalry audacity!

But what is that line of fire which suddenly shoots upon the flank of Moukhtar's straggling line of skirmishers? Kepis jump up behind every rock, every big stone, even by the bed of the stream nearly up to the front of the Ottoman trenches, as suddenly as demons, shot from a stage-trap in Drury Lane at Yuletide, spring to their feet, not merely a company nor a battalion, not even a brigade, but, as in their consternation the Turks think, more than a division of Russians between Moukhtar's lines and the brigade he has sent to the front to

chastise the audacity of those Cossack horsemen. Not an outpost, not an advanced-post, not one of those wretched Turkish captains and lieutenants who are as far below the intelligence of their men as they are beneath contempt in military acquirements, have even suspected the Russian "dodge."

I cannot blame Moukhtar or Mehemet any further than for their persistent neglect of their cavalry screen. Any general commanding, either in chief or of brigade, must work with such instruments as he finds ready to his hands; but it happens unfortunately that there are not many dozen regimental officers in the Ottoman service worth their rations. We have all deplored this throughout the campaign, but never have there been such examples of it as on this night and morning of November 4th and 5th.

It is only natural, that after such horrible slaughter as occurred at Alagsdagh on the 14th and 15th October, the Turkish troops should have begun to believe in their own vulnerability. They saw a whole brigade cut off by a manœuvre which nothing but a success could justify. Had the Turkish junior officers on the front works done their duty, there would have been such a massacre of the Muscovite troops as has hardly a parallel in modern history. But Heimann's foolhardiness has been transformed by the result into adventurous generalship; and when the poor nizams and redifs, who had not been shot down on the slopes of the lower ravine, found that there was a chance of regaining their trenches, they had to fight their way through the Russians climbing the scarp at the same instant as themselves, while from the trenches above there was hardly a solitary shot to encourage them to persevere, or to show that, even when they reached their earth-works, there would be a rallying point after their all but superhuman labours.

But the guns—what were they doing? The artillerymen, mostly raw, seemed to be paralysed the instant the ambushed Muscovs jumped up from behind the rocks. There are whispers that the ever-working gold of Mr. Obermüller's consulate, for there *was* Russian gold in Erzeroum even after the Russian consul had gone, had tempted the officers of these batteries. But at any rate, the panic which was natural enough among the Ottoman skirmishers prevailed from the first among the gunners in the redoubts.

The whole thing lasted something less than an hour and a half. Captain Creagh tells us that "the Turkish gunners cut the traces of their artillery, mounted their horses, and galloped away. It was every man for himself—a universal *saute qui peut*. . . . The brave infantry did what they could for a short time, but it was a forlorn hope." A fight for life ensued when the poor, straggling, half-demented Turks arrived for shelter at Erzeroum. The governor had closed the gates, but they were forced, and many a mouth bit the dust in the struggle for shelter. Had the Russians followed up their victory they would have taken Erzeroum that night; but as we saw in June on the Tahir Pass, they did not follow up.

During the night and morning, Moukhtar,—and if there be a man who never despaired, it is Ghazi Moukhtar Pacha,—was able to get together a sufficient force to hold the advanced forts of Erzeroum, and even to re-occupy some of redoubts on the crest of the Deven Boyun ridge. But the fatal blow was given when Heimann's wild tactics developed into a success, and when the commander-in-chief of the 4th Army Corps was compelled by a panic, in which he did not share, to abandon the second line of earthworks commanding the twin ravine between Deven Boyun and Kurujouk.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHEN the commander-in-chief left Kars in the end of April, he confided the care of the fortress to Hussein Hami Pacha, a lieutenant-general, Hussein Bey, colonel commanding the artillery, and twenty-nine battalions, averaging a little over 600 men each. When he was forced to leave it again in October, Hussein Hami once more had the command, owing to the non-arrival of Mushir Mustapha Pacha from Erzeroum, and to a wound received in the fighting of the 15th October by Reis Ahmed Pacha, who would otherwise have been left in charge of the great fortress. But unfortunately, instead of 18,000 men in garrison there were not more than 10,000 nizams and redifs, and although the adult males of all creeds in the city were compelled to bear arms and take some part in the defence, it is unnecessary to say that they were in many respects a source of weakness rather than of strength when the day of trial came.

Fewer than 17,000 regulars are insufficient to man the parapets of the works of Kars in case of an assault, and even counting the civilians, dragged from the bazaar to the works, there were nothing like that number of men able to give any help within the enceinte. 3,500 sick and wounded crowded the hospitals, overflowed into the khans, and were even stowed away in covered markets; but the fighting men did not exceed 10,000. In other words, one-third at least of the works of Kars could not be defended in case of an assault.

Provisions were plentiful, there being at least six months'

full supplies of food for the garrison ; and of ammunition there was no lack, as Hussein Bey had never parted with the large stock of siege projectiles he had laid in after our relief of Kars in July. He was short, without doubt, of smaller shells, but that made the less matter as he had no more than one battery in which to use them.

The Russians, of course well informed, as in the panic after Alagsdagh their spies could obtain ready access to the city, knew perfectly well what Kars had and what it had not. It had enough men to work the guns for months, and consequently a mere bombardment would have been of no avail, since in the spring the Turkish fire was found at least equal to that of the invaders. It had not enough men to defend all the works. An assault, therefore, offered the most likely means of a successful attack. Accordingly an assault was resolved upon. But in order to deceive the garrison, a formal summons to surrender was sent to the commandant on the 25th October, and he summoned a council of war embracing all officers down to the rank of *chef de bataillon*—that is, of all the officers holding the Sultan's commission—who unanimously determined to hold the place to the last.

On the 26th Melikoff occupied in force the valley of the Kars Tchai, and such of the heights behind the city as were not in the hands of the Turks. On the same day the fortress was cut off from communication with the rest of the world, although from time to time, as during the previous siege, an occasional Tcherkess or Karapapak, favoured by the darkness and the softness of the ground, which deadened the footfall of his horse, contrived to escape with verbal messages and sometimes written despatches.

A desultory cannonade began on the 29th, on which day Melikoff had certain information that he would have to

count on a resistance from no more than 10,000 men. It was not until the 4th November, however, that anything like active operations were begun ; but on that day the Russians erected siege batteries near the position they first chose in May, though they now approached very much nearer to Hafiz Pacha fort at the south-east angle of the enceinte, and to Karadagh fort and redoubt. The works at this point were attacked on the 5th by a small force of Turks, who were probably inspired by the remembrance that nearly six months before they had destroyed the first of the invader's batteries near the same spot. But the Russians had not forgotten this fact either, and they had placed a whole regiment close at hand for the protection of their redoubts. This (Kutais) regiment not only drove the Ottomans back into their lines, but actually entered Hafiz fort and spiked eight guns, just as they had entered the Karadagh redoubt last June and carried off the breech pieces of the cannon there mounted. But partly because this regiment was not adequately supported, and partly because Hafiz Pacha tabia cannot be held under the plunging fire of the neighbouring forts, the Russians had to retire, and in their retreat lost a good many more men than in the forward fighting. The invaders on the 6th had sixty siege pieces in position, and yet on the 8th and 9th they suspended their fire while other batteries were being constructed.

Progress was naturally much slower than it had been in May, for the weather had become fearfully cold, though little snow had actually fallen. Melikoff felt that if he depended solely on bombardment, he would waste a good deal of powder and shot and do little good. Accordingly he ordered an assault on the night of the 13th November. When the columns were actually in position, and had even advanced so far as to attract the notice of the Turkish

sentries, General Lazareff pointed out that the ground was too slippery for escalade of the heights, while there was too much water over the lower ground to the south of Kars to allow of the easy advance of the troops. Consequently the columns were withdrawn after slight skirmishing, and an irregular cannonade was maintained for several days.

On the night of the 17th, the weather and the ground having slightly improved, the army of Melikoff was put in motion. The moon was near the full, but the darkness was very deep, except now and then when a faint gleam of light struggled through. The columns were formed up about six o'clock, and they advanced at eight against the devoted stronghold. Not fewer than 30,000 Russians were on the spot, but only about 18,000 took an actual part in the affair, which was directed by Loris Melikoff himself, the Grand Duke Michael, as usual, playing the part of a meddlesome looker-on. General Lazareff, who had charge of the flank march round Alagsdagh, now commanded the right wing, with the 40th Division of infantry, and it was his business to attack Hafız Pacha tabia and Karadagh. General Count Grabbe was entrusted with the Russian centre, having with him one regiment of the Moscow grenadiers and the 1st Regiment of the 39th Division. Generals Roop and Komaroff were placed on the left with what were left of the Akhalteikh troops, or, as they have been called since May, the Ardahan brigade, supported by a second regiment of the Moscow grenadiers.

The attack began in the centre, where, for some strange reason, the Turks made but a feeble resistance. The very audacity of the attack, under cover of the night, upon virtually the strongest fortress of the world, each part of which, by daylight, supported and commanded other parts in a way very unusually complete, seems to have paralysed

the Ottoman defence. Months ago Hussein Bey declared to me that Kars had only one weak point, and that he believed nobody knew it but himself. The Russians knew it, however, when they found that the Turks had no more than 600 men to each mile of parapet, and certainly not more than 1,000 even when the unwilling and incompetent traders of the bazaar were dragged or driven up to the ramparts, which they incommoded without defending. Then all the 300 siege guns of Kars were useless, or next to useless, in the darkness. To employ them without being able to see against what points they should be directed, was to do as much harm as good.

And so the defence of Kars fell to the infantry, already half-demoralised by the massacre of Alagsdagh. Yet, for a time, they fought well. It was three hours before the few hundred men in the Khanli fort succeeded in reaching the parapet, and as he ascended it, General Count Grabbe fell, pierced by a Peabody bullet. He was succeeded, as I am told, by General Belinski, and before the night was over that officer also bit the dust. But omelettes are not made without breaking eggs, and even at a great sacrifice of officers, Kars was worth having. Once in possession of the Khanli tabia, — for the Ottomans withdrew as soon as the enemy was fairly in the work, — the Russians had pierced the enceinte at a vital point, unless the Turks could bring their artillery to bear upon it. The darkness prevented this, although an attempt was made from the adjoining redoubts to clear the work of the invaders. In a very few minutes afterwards another work, called Suvarry, or Cavalry fort, was similarly carried, the Russian loss being here much smaller than at Khanli. The citadel, inaccessible from all points save one, was next taken, simply because its little garrison fled. At

Karadagh tabia the Turks fought most stoutly. For ten hours they kept the Russians at bay. Time after time they hurled them back, but each time their strength grew less, while there were always new forces of the enemy swarming up the steep cliff on which it is built. Simple exhaustion ended the affair, and at six a.m. on the 18th the Russians had won the key of Kars.

Hafiz Pacha fort had given in about two o'clock in the morning,—it is said owing to the bribery of its commandant, who had deserted to the Russian lines and then conducted the assaulting column right into his own work. There is always a cry of treason when some great military disaster befalls a nation ; but it is impossible to believe this charge. For, in the first place, Hafiz Pacha fort was not entered until after two other works had been taken ; and one need not go farther to find a reason for the success of the Russians than the figures I have given of their number in comparison with that of their opponents. Takmash and Arab forts, on the northern heights, held out till eight o'clock, and then their garrisons, exposed to the daylight fire of the guns of the other works, now turned against them, were compelled to give way, and sought safety in flight over the mountains. But the Russians were ready for this ; their cavalry swarmed over the ranges, and every wearer of a fez was either taken on the spot or driven back into Kars.

There is no doubt of the brilliant nature of this feat of arms ; but I maintain that, in some respects, the momentous event will be associated with as much credit for the Ottomans as for their conquerors. The latter admit a loss of over 2,500 men in killed and wounded. The resistance ; then, of the Turks, overweighted and outnumbered as they were, was in many places, heroic ; and when we further

consider that of the 10,000 nizams and redifs and the 3,000 or 4,000 casuals picked up in the city streets, some 5,000 were either killed or wounded, we may well spare, in our contemplation of the extent of the Russian triumph, a tribute of respect to the Osmanli, who fell—

“ . . . facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of their fathers,
And the temples of their gods.”

The Russian trophies consisted of over 300 guns, most of them brass siege pieces made at Tophané on the Krupp model, an immense store of ammunition for large guns, provisions for many months, and 4,500 sick and wounded Turks, besides prisoners, called 10,000 in number, though this can only be true if there are counted the civilians forced to take arms into their hands. Typhoid began to rage at once, and the masses of dead lying about for days helped to load with yet more impurities the always foul atmosphere of Kars.

On the 20th the Grand Duke, ever ready to push himself into prominence elsewhere than in the field, made a solemn entry, and entertained his principal officers in the palace of the mutaseriff, or civil governor. But he could not stand the pestilential city, and he removed his head-quarters to Vairan Kaleh, near Ardost, on the 21st–22nd November, leaving only a garrison to occupy the great Armenian fortress, while Melikoff was sent on to the aid of Heimann and Tergukasoff at Erzeroum.

With that persistent inertness which has throughout the campaign characterised the Russian generals on the morrow of a success, Generals Heimann and Tergukasoff failed to follow up their blow; but beyond a doubt Erzeroum lay for twenty-four hours at their mercy, merely by a sacrifice of

a few men. It was not until about four o'clock in the yet dark morning of the 9th November that the Russian columns were once more put in motion. Then they attempted to surprise, and in point of fact did surprise, the fort erected on the Deven Boyun road, around some of the barracks recently constructed. Once more the Turks made the fatal blunder of sparse sentries along their front. The enemy was upon them in the dead of the black morning, before they were aware of his approach. But the Turks rallied very soon, even when the Russ was in force within the works, and beat off the invader, who left the "trenches filled with his dead," while he was pursued for an hour and a half. But the pursuit was of a rather timid nature, for in his leisurely retirement Heimann carried off nineteen Turkish-officers and 540 soldiers as prisoners, or claims to have done so. But as he says that the total Russian loss was but "thirty-two killed, and 600 wounded or slightly injured," we are not bound to credit either of the statements he makes. And the Turks deny both.

Still, he had attained such a measure of success, even with an imperfectly executed plan, that one would have looked for its repetition at the earliest possible moment. But five other days passed before he once more at day-break attacked, near the same south-east point of the works. Once he entered Azizie fort, and yet once again he was driven back at the point of the bayonet by "Captain" Mehemet Pacha, who has shown throughout this campaign an almost British affection for "cold steel." The Turks claim to have buried over 400 Russian bodies.

On the 13th November the Russian cavalry had worked round through the hills to the plain to the north, and remained there scouring the country, but doing nothing else until the end of the month, when they disappeared,

because their communications were affected by the snow-drifts which had begun to accumulate in the mountain gorges.

They seem never to have even attempted to cut the Turkish base, or interfere with Ahmed Moukhtar's telegraph lines. On the 18th November Heimann directed the construction of siege works against Azizie fort, and although the operation was materially impeded by the Ottoman fire, there is no doubt he succeeded so far as to get four pieces in a position to command Erzeroum. For on the 22nd General Heimann sent Ghazi Moukhtar a summons to surrender the city. After twenty-four hours, and after consulting Constantinople, a defiance was returned, and Erzeroum is to be defended to "the last stone"? Although up to the present moment the assault has been postponed and the bombardment pretermitted, no one who knows the terrain can doubt the ultimate result unless Ahmed Moukhtar Pacha has at least 40,000 men. Three feet of snow on the 25th November,^b followed by further falls, have for the present respited the last Ottoman stronghold in Armenia.

A P P E N D I X .

A.

OUR interests in Armenia have lately been the subjects of a good deal of ridicule. Lord de la Zouche has, however, told us, and truly, as Mr. Bryce has also indicated from another point of view, that, to quote Curzon's "Armenia," "This country, the cradle of the human family, inoffensive and worthless of itself, has for centuries, indeed from the beginning of time, been a bone of contention between conflicting powers." And why? Because through it runs the straight line between the great East and the greater West; because the Asiatic hordes, pouring upon Europe, found it one of their two highways of emigration; because from London and Paris, from Vienna and from Frankfort, a line drawn to Delhi passes nearly through Erzeroum and Kars, thence on to Teheran; because, in point of fact, armies, as well as commerce, take the shortest route, until the progress of science makes up by speed for directness.

It is very well to say that steam, and the opening of the Suez Canal, have changed in some measure our trade relations with Persia and the Asiatic regions immediately beyond. This is, to a limited extent, true; but it would be more true to say that the falling off in English exports to Persia, Turkestan, and Western Afghanistan, is due to Russian aggression, which is, and has been, and will be, as conspicuous in trade as it ever has been in military affairs.

I hope that I shall not be told that a straight line from London through Paris to Delhi, drawn upon an ordinary map, does not touch Turkey at all; but upon a Mercator's projection it will be found to pass through, or very near, Vienna and Varna, Erzeroum and Kars, Teheran and Kandahar. The water routes, save of course that round the Cape, do not vary far from this line. Trade always makes the shortest connections when possible, and the shortest connections with north Persia are from the Black Sea.

Mr. Consul W. Gifford Palgrave—and why Trebizond has been turned into a vice-consulate passes comprehension, the present vice-consul doing twice as much as some consuls, and five times as much as some consuls-general—describes the new wagon-road from Trebizond to Erzeroum as, “still” “the main artery of Persian traffic.” He tells us that, “By this route arrives and passes at least one half of the commerce between Europe and Persia. By it, too, passes a large subsidiary trade with the inlands of Anatolia itself.” He asserts that, “In spite of Russian rivalry, this traffic is steadily on the increase;” and he says that while “nine-tenths of the steamer cargoes at Trebizond, going and coming, are for or from Persia,” of the in-going trade, “Manchester goods, sugar, and iron, are the most notable items.” In the report for 1869-70, he says, “that the importance of the general traffic, *viâ* Trebizond . . . is increasing;” that more than half the imports by the Austrian steamers consists of English manufacture; “while even the Russian steamers import a large proportion of Manchester goods.” And with regard to the Tiflis and Poti route—“the fact is, that the Trebizond-Erzeroum route is so much the nearer of the two, and the Turkish territory, with all its drawbacks, so much less disagreeable for caravan drivers to traverse than the

Russian, that these two motives alone have thus far sufficed—and, precluding extraordinary contingencies, may long do so—to retain the main Persian traffic in the old Trebizond line.” Mr. Palgrave assures us, in his report of May, 1869, that, “though Trebizond possesses little direct correspondence with British houses of commerce, and the arrival of British steam or sail (ships?) in the port is rare, yet, by indirect traffic, and passing through Constantinople agents or brokers, full two-thirds of the imports here are English manufactures, such as cottons, calicos, and hardware. Again, of the exports in cereals, tobacco, wool, hides, and carpets, a fair proportion, it seems, goes to England. Hence it follows that the traffic of this port and coast cannot be held for unimportant for us, either in demand or supply.” He proceeds to tell us that “Samsoon, Batoom, and Ordoo . . . are rapidly rising in importance. . . . Their exports and imports are, directly or indirectly, chiefly to and from England.” One of Mr. Palgrave’s correspondents at Samsoon says, “Our imports are chiefly manufactured goods; these are almost exclusively from England. . . . iron, in bars and worked, these, again, are English.”

The latest reports that I can find on the commerce of Armenia are in the Commercial volume, No. 9, of 1876, where Mr. Vice-Consul Biliotti, although complaining of “a general depression of commercial affairs,” and especially declaring that “Trebizond is fast declining as an emporium for Persia,” nevertheless, and in spite of the competition with Poti, gives a table showing an increase from £797,459 in 1866 to £838,298 in 1875 through the port of Trebizond alone, which, it need hardly be said, does not by any means exhaust our interests upon that section of the Euxine coast. Moreover, while the lowest

return has been within £25 of £600,000 in these ten years, the highest has been £1,366,362. Nor, as any one who knows the trade will say, do these figures by any means represent our ultimate interest in the commerce of the Black Sea southern coast. I have myself bought woollen shirts in Erzeroum, which bore a German label on the paper and an English stamp upon the collar. But personal experiences are neither here nor there, and it must be confessed that Mr. Biliotti's reports are not by any means so favourable to the general aspect of British trade as those of his predecessors. However against his statement that "British shipping has no chance to obtain again the importance which it had twenty years ago," we find from more than one of the consular authorities in the interior—whose names can only be given with their permission, but who may be referred to privately—that in iron, copper, and cotton goods, especially yarns of certain colours and textures, there is a sufficient trade for two steamers per month of 1,000 tons burthen. These it is said would not be too much for our British trade direct, to say nothing of the enormous quantity of miscellaneous goods which passes through the hands of merchants and brokers in Stamboul and elsewhere, and which represents a certain consumption of British products.

Lord Derby has, in the way leading politicians will do, seized hold of the imperfect statement of some fatuous person, that Trebizond was the key of the Suez Canal, or words to that effect. But, apart from such absurdities, and in the hope that we need not be tied, in England, to one string to our bow, it may be worth while to point out that Mr. Taylor, late consul for Erzeroum and Koordistan, says, "Nearly 10,000 bales of cotton goods passed through Erzeroum, *en route* for Persia, in excess of those sent

through in 1872." Mr. Biliotti declares, in 1874, that in the port of Trebizond alone, "cotton manufactures, from their importance, are far ahead of all other articles, and, with the exception of about 10 per cent., they are British." It is naturally impossible to obtain even proximate returns of Turkish trade in a community whose custom house officers and whose merchants are chiefly of the Armenian race. My own slight acquaintance with the port would not justify me in applying to any one—to any body of men—the epithets which nevertheless have been, under the heading of "Commercial Reports," presented to Parliament by command of Her Majesty; for there I not only find it stated, upon high consular and literary authority, that in "the Ottoman tribunals of our day native Christian influence is all-powerful," but also that in the chief towns of the province the population is largely made up of "a town rabble of usurers and swindlers."

We have seen that we are largely interested, not only in the Armenian, but in the Trebizond trade. It may be found in the reports of Consul Taylor that in the twenty years, 1840–60, the merchandise for Persia only entered at Trebizond, was £21,253,620, of which three-fourths was English, and more than two-thirds of that again cotton. So lately as 1866 Consul Taylor told the English people that the value of the transit trade was £2,191,300—once more three-fourths English.

I cannot do better than quote at this point Mr. Gifford Palgrave's statement that, "nine-tenths of the steamer export and import at Trebizond has reference to the Persian traffic," in spite of "an extra two per cent. duty imposed on all articles of Persian transit to and fro." In drawing attention to one of the causes which have affected the transit trade of Trebizond, Mr. Consul Palgrave wrote,

under date of March 13th, 1870, that the excess of the Russian steamer export accounts on the coast traffic "is chiefly due to an exceptional contract made between the Russian steamer agents of the Black Sea and the bulk of the Persian merchants at Tabreez and Trebizond, whereby the Persians have engaged themselves to employ Russian transport on these seas; while the Russians, in their turn, allow the Persians a considerable reduction on the ordinary fares." But this acute observer not only states a fact, he traces its cause. He says that "the consular rank of the Russian steamer agents on these coasts, *the active support given by the national embassies at Constantinople and Teheran, and the peculiar Russian singleness of tenacious purpose, which makes all their external relations, even the commercial ones, subservient to political, AND, PERHAPS, TO TERRITORIAL AGGRANDIZEMENT, have determined, and still maintain this engagement.*" He goes on to say that the attempts of the Turkish and French companies, to break up this convention, have been over-ridden and outwitted; and that, as regards the internal roads, the danger to be feared is not Russian competition, but the "excessive tolls and monopolies, for the jobbing of which bankrupt Levantines and intriguing 'native Christians' are even now anxiously on the look out."

Mr. Palgrave, with that British frankness which some other officials might well imitate, tells us in no roundabout phrases the reason that we, as a nation, have so little direct trade with the coast from Constantinople to Trebizond; he says, "The four steamer companies (Austrian, Turkish, French, and Russian) now plying on these seas have formed, to their own great advantage, and to the no less detriment of trade in general, a monopoly which they have disguised under the seemlier name of a 'convention.'

It is based on a tariff which is so much in excess of the ordinary steamer charges, both for persons and goods, that the freightage of either between Trebizond and Constantinople now equals in cost about half that between Constantinople and Marseilles, though the distance is scarcely one-fourth ; and it is further corroborated by various artificial regulations, all tending to hamper trade in favour of the companies above mentioned. In this their monopoly, however, it need scarcely be said the Russian 'Black Sea Steamer Company,' considerably stronger than its associates, because freely subsidized by the Russian Government and well supported by the Embassy at Constantinople, with a well-paid and highly-titled girdle of consuls and agents round the coast, takes the lion's share. The consequence is that commerce is directly and indirectly kept under ;" and it is distinctly charged against the French agencies that they have made an agreement with the Russians, by which the real interests of the Messageries were "sacrificed to the private advantages of their agents at Trebizond and Constantinople."

Consul Palgrave is of opinion, as are other consuls in this section of Turkey, that an English line of steamers . . . running fortnightly . . . would make an excellent business, if Poti were added to the route along the coast.

I commend the whole series of these reports alike to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, to his sympathisers, and to his critics. It is all very well to say that our trade with Trebizond is dying. If it is, why ? These reports supply an answer which I have had no hesitation in frankly indicating.

B

THE following extracts from the tables accompanying Vice-Consul Biliotti's report, presented in 1876, give the last figures obtainable of the local and transit trades of Trebizonde, so far as Great Britain is *directly* affected :—

	Total Value.
Exports from Trebizond to Great Britain . .	£95,560
„ „ Persia, through Trebizond, to	
Great Britain	£104,081
<hr/>	
Imports to Turkey, by Trebizond, from	
Great Britain	£83,526
Imports to Persia, by Trebizond, from	
Great Britain	£754,764*
<hr/>	
Balance in favour of Great Britain .	£734,209

Mr. Biliotti says : “ Taking the total value of the cotton manufactures imported into Turkey from 1866 to 1870 inclusively, and that of the five remaining years, there is a difference of no less than £420,160 in favour of the latter period, or an average annual increase of the important sum of £84,000,” though he proceeds to show that a portion of this is due to two years’ excessive trade. On the other hand, for two other years “ British trade with Persia ” has been “ in a depressed condition.”

* Of which £724,120 was “ cotton and woollen manufactures.”

C.

GHAZI AHMED MOUKHTAR PACHA.

THE Commander-in-Chief of the 4th Turkish Army Corps is no patrician by origin, but springs direct from a family engaged in trade, and some members of it still continue in the paternal employment. His grandfather was Hadji Ibrahim Agha, head of the guild of silk merchants of Broussa, a thriving town of Asia Minor, nestling at the foot of the Bithynian Mount Olympus, and famous for its silk looms. His father, Hadji Halil Agha died young, and Ahmed Moukhtar, who was born in 1837, was brought up by his grandfather, who sent him, in 1849, to the preparatory military school of his native city.

Young Katyrdschy Oghlu—for such is the family name, which, in accordance with Eastern custom, is seldom if ever used—manifested a remarkable aptitude for military studies; and at the expiration of five years he passed from the school first of his class. Entering the Military Academy at Constantinople, he remained four years as pupil, when, in consequence of his progress, he was promoted, while still pursuing his studies, to the grade of lieutenant. When he left, as a further reward of merit, he was made captain on the staff, and in that capacity he, in 1860, joined the head-quarters of the Sedar Ekrem Omer Pacha, in Montenegro. Nor was he long here before he found occasion to distinguish himself. Towards the close of the campaign, he found himself one day with some

cavalry near the defile of Ustruck, then in the possession of a considerable force of the enemy. Seeing an opportunity, he went at the Montenegrins, drove them out of the defile, and although twice wounded, managed to hold it for some hours until reinforcements arrived. For this feat Omer Pacha conferred on him the Fifth Class of the Medjidie and the rank of coulasse, or adjutant-major. After peace was temporarily made, Ahmed Moukhtar returned to the Military Academy, where he was appointed to the post of Professor of Astronomy, Military Architecture, and Fortification. In this somewhat mixed capacity he remained until 1863, when he was sent as binbashi, or major and chief of the staff of the division of Islaheye—a division of organisation—at Alexandretta, under the command of Dervish Pacha, now mushir at Batoum.

At the end of 1864 the young soldier was appointed caimakam, or lieutenant-colonel, and tutor to Prince Youssef Issedin, the eldest son of Sultan Abdul Aziz, who was believed to be anxious that his son should succeed to the throne instead of the eldest male of the family, as the Ottoman rule is. In order to qualify this rather wilful young Prince—whom some flatterers called “the Prince Imperial”—for this position, it was resolved that he should make the grand tour, and under the charge of Lieut.-Colonel Ahmed Moukhtar the youth visited England, France, Germany, and Austria. During this trip European sovereigns showered honours on the “governor” of Youssef Issedin. He received the Legion of Honour, the Red Eagle, and the Crown of Iron among other decorations, and in 1867 returned to Constantinople. At that time Prince Youssef became colonel of the Imperial Guard, and was emancipated from the trammels of pupillage.

Ahmed Moukhtar was appointed one of the Commis-

sioners for regulating the frontier of Montenegro, in which capacity he served until 1869, by his policy saving to Turkey the strategical point of Veli Malou Berdu, between Spitz and Podgoritza, while as the ex-professor of fortifications he made the *tête du pont* of Vezir Kupri. So enraged were the Montenegrins at this last movement, that a party of them fired on the young colonel—for now he had the full rank—killing another officer of the same grade at his side. For these services he was promoted to the Third Class of the Medjidie, and, returning to Stamboul, was made a member of the Council of War.

Three months later he was nominated general of brigade, under Redif Pacha, then commanding the Yemen expedition against the Arabs. Soon after Moukhtar's arrival, Redif fell ill, and the command fell into the hands of the young liwa, or major-general. He took the city of Yedy, and was promoted for that achievement to the grade of ferik, or general of division, and chief of all the corps in Yemen, Redif becoming Governor, until he was superseded, on the ground of illness, by Essad Pacha.

When Ali Pacha, the Minister of War, died, Essad Pacha became Seraskier, and Moukhtar was promoted to mushir (or full general) and the Governorship of Yemen, in 1871, at the age of thirty-three. As if honours could not be heaped upon him fast enough, he also received the Osmanli of the First Class in brilliants. After the taking of Sana, he was further decorated with the First Class of the Medjidie.

In 1873 he returned to Stamboul, where he was appointed Minister of Public Works ; but he did not take up the post, as a few days afterwards he was named Governor of Crete. He was not destined, however, to rule the people, whom St. Paul describes as "always liars," for the

command of the Shumla army corps fell vacant, and it was conferred on the young mushir. He remained at Shumla for thirteen and a half months, during which time he constructed the existing fortifications. Next, appointed Governor and Military Commandant at Erzeroum, he served in the Armenian capital for another thirteen and a half months, when, for yet a third period of thirteen and a half months, he took the command of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, where his friends claim for him—he has never claimed for himself—that he gained twenty battles, and only lost one. Now named Governor of Candia, he was at the end of ten days about to leave Constantinople, when the Government detained him to have his advice on the questions affecting Montenegro, giving him the nominal command of the 4th or Erzeroum Army Corps.

On the 25th March last, while in his bureau at Stamboul, he learnt that for the first time the prospects of peace were judged hopeless by Turkish statesmen, and making an immediate application for a ship, he left in a man-of-war on the 26th for Trebizond, where he arrived on the 30th, proceeding, after three days' hard work in the organisation of land transport, etc., to Erzeroum and Kars. He had only three weeks to provide for the defence of Armenia when the war broke out, and in less than a week from his arrival in Kars, that fortress was invested, and Moukhtar retired on the Soghanly Dagħ. The rest of his story is before the world.

On the evening of the 1st of October he received the news that the Sultan had conferred on him the title of Ghazi, one of the greatest honours that can be given to an Ottoman. The word originally means fanatic, but in its modern acceptation it is both Defender of the Faith and Conqueror. Besides this title, the First Class of the

Medjidie in diamonds, two fine Arab horses, and a sword in brilliants, marked his Ottoman Majesty's sense of Ahmed Moukhtar's services.

His excellency, who has been distinguished throughout the campaign by his great consideration for and great kindness to the representatives of the Press, has himself dabbled in authorship, being the author of an astronomical work called "Fenni Bassite, ou La Science du Quadrant Solaire pour le Temps Turque," the hours in Turkey depending upon the moment of sunset, and consequently varying from day to day.

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